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**The Student's Old Testament**

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**PROVERBS AND DIDACTIC POEMS**

# THE STUDENT'S OLD TESTAMENT

LOGICALLY AND CHRONOLOGICALLY  
ARRANGED AND TRANSLATED

BY

CHARLES FOSTER KENT, Ph.D., Litt.D.

WOOLLEY PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE IN YALE UNIVERSITY

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The Student's Old Testament

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# PROVERBS AND DIDACTIC POEMS

BY

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NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1927

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED  
TO THE GOODLY FELLOWSHIP OF THE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON RELIGION IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
TO WHICH IN HIS LAST YEARS PROFESSOR KENT  
DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS ENERGY AND IN  
WHICH HIS SPIRIT STILL LIVES



## FOREWORD

THE greater part of the present work had been completed by Professor Kent before the illness which ended in his untimely death in May, 1925. The successive volumes of *The Student's Old Testament* have been familiar to scholars and laymen for many years, and have exercised a wide influence both in this country and abroad. Their author was a tireless worker, who spared no pains to accomplish his purpose. Each book in the series is the fruit of long study which aimed to use all the helpful material, ancient and modern, with an open mind. His careful translations, based on the original languages with constant reference to the principal versions, and arranged according to a comprehensive plan of his own, fill a unique place among the modern helps to the study of the Bible.

The subject of this volume, *The Work of Israel's Wise Men*, was especially congenial to Professor Kent, and had interested him for many years. He had already given it a brief and popular treatment in his *Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs*, published in 1895, and ever since then had been collecting material for a more thorough and extensive work. A glance at the critical notes appended to the present translation will serve to show the reader how seriously he took his difficult task. Like its predecessors, the volume testifies to its author's ability to construct a book fitted for practical use by students and teachers.

The publishers have been fortunate in securing for the completion of the unfinished work the collaboration of Doctor Millar Burrows, a former pupil of Professor Kent; one who, in addition to being a competent and careful scholar, is also able as few others could be to carry the task through to its end in the method and the spirit of its original author. There will be found no unevenness in the execution. The many readers of Professor Kent's printed works, as well as those—also many in number—who were privileged to be his pupils and friends, may take satisfaction in the knowledge that the book which he had long planned and nearly finished can now be presented to the public substantially in the shape which he himself would have given it.

CHARLES C. TORREY.

February 15, 1927.





## PREFACE

THIS is substantially Professor Kent's book. According to his own estimate the task as he left it was about two-thirds done. In completing it I have tried to do as nearly as I could what he would have done. All passages found in the Shorter Bible are, with very few alterations, given here as they are rendered in that valuable little work, though this often necessitated considerable change in other passages to secure uniformity of style and diction. In those portions of the text which were entirely missing from the manuscript, and which I have therefore had to translate myself,\* I have tried to follow Doctor Kent's method and manner.

Professor Kent believed that a new translation of the Bible should be couched in plain, vigorous, idiomatic, "Anglo-Saxon" language, the language spoken and understood by the modern man. This ideal involves no little difficulty. To avoid archaic expressions without falling into unlovely colloquialisms, to be idiomatic without too far sacrificing local color and literary flavor, and at the same time to convey some sense of the form and rhythm of the original—all this is not easy, especially in translating poetry. Perfect balance and consistency can hardly be expected, to say nothing of originality. The present work, leaning sometimes rather heavily upon earlier versions and sometimes venturing to walk alone, endeavors throughout to present that rendering of the text which will most adequately reproduce its meaning and spirit for the modern reader.

In the general plan of the book and the notes there has been even less change than in the translation. The critical and exegetical views expressed are Professor Kent's. Some things, indeed, have been allowed to stand which he might have altered if he had been able to revise the manuscript. The classification of the Proverbs might have been changed in a few particulars. In the sections of Proverbs which were lacking in the manuscript, the arrangement of Professor Kent's early book, *The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs*, has been followed, though he would probably have revised this arrangement somewhat, as he did in the other sections. On questions of text and interpretation in the passages which I have had to supply I have necessarily, of course, leaned more upon my own understanding.

\* Job 17<sup>13-16</sup>, 31<sup>1-4</sup>, 38-39, 40<sup>15-41</sup>; many scattered verses in Proverbs and all of §§ 54-64, except such verses as are included in the Shorter Bible; Ecc. 6, 7<sup>7</sup>, 10-25, 27-30, 8<sup>1</sup>, 11-12, 10<sup>2-20</sup>, 12<sup>2-14</sup>.

## PREFACE

The omission of Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon is a matter of regret, but, although a chapter of the Introduction is given to Sirach, it is unlikely that Professor Kent intended to include these books in the volume. He left no manuscript of either, while the canonical books had been worked upon again and again.

In passing on to Doctor Kent's friends and readers this concluding volume of the series which is perhaps the most important of all his literary achievements, I wish to express my gratitude to Mrs. Kent for the honor of being given this share in the work of my lamented teacher and friend. Like many other young men, I owed Professor Kent a personal debt far greater than I could ever repay or express. Not only did I have the privilege of working with him; he also brought me into the "goodly fellowship" to which, with Mrs. Kent's approval, I have ventured to dedicate this volume.

I must also acknowledge my obligations to Mr. H. A. Sherman, of Charles Scribner's Sons, for many courtesies; to Professor George Dahl, of the Yale Divinity School; Professor H. T. Fowler, of Brown University; and Professor James Muilenburg, of Mount Holyoke College, for suggestions regarding the bibliography, and especially to Professor C. C. Torrey, of Yale University, who has given similar suggestions, has read the entire manuscript and illuminated several dark problems of text and interpretation, and has graciously written the Foreword for the volume. To Mrs. Burrows I am indebted for invaluable assistance in proof-reading and other details.

MILLAR BURROWS.

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# EXPLANATION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

**Text** in roman type.

**Foot-notes**, presenting the reasons for the analysis and classification of the material, significant alternate readings, and explanatory material, in small roman type.

**Interpretative side-headings**, giving a condensed summary of the accompanying text, on the margins in small roman type.

**Chapter numbers** in arabic figures. **Verse numbers** in small figures placed above the line. **Successive portions of a verse** indicated by <sup>a</sup>, <sup>b</sup> or <sup>c</sup>, placed after the verse number. Thus, Proverbs I. 3 (second part of the verse) to II. 5 (first half) is written 1<sup>sb</sup>-2<sup>sa</sup>.

**Complete literary units** are numbered with arabic numerals and referred to as sections. Thus, § 2 refers to § 2, *Wisdom's Appeal*, p. 46.

## General Abbreviations

ASJL = American Journal of Semitic Languages.	Heb. = Hebrew.	sc. = namely.
AV = Authorized Version.	Introd. = Introduction.	Sym. = Symmachus's version of the O.T.
Ar. = Arabic.	i. e. = that is.	
Aram. = Aramaic.	Lat. = Latin version of the O.T.	Syr. = Syriac version of the O.T.
BDB = Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon.	Lit. = literally.	Targ. = Targum.
cf. = confer, see.	MSS. = Manuscripts.	Theod. = Theodotian's version of the O.T.
cp. = compare.	N.T. = New Testament.	Trad. = traditional.
e. g. = for example.	Old Lat. = Old Latin version of the O.T.	Vs. = verse.
Eth. = Ethiopic version of the O.T.	O.T. = Old Testament.	Vs. = see above.
E.V.V. = English versions.	RV = Revised Version.	Vss. = verses.
Gk. = Greek version of the O.T.	Sah. = Sahidic version of the O.T.	VSS. = versions.

## Abbreviations for the Biblical and Apocryphal Books

Gen. = Genesis.	Is. = Isaiah.	Mt. = Matthew.
Ex. = Exodus.	Jer. = Jeremiah.	Mk. = Mark.
Ley. = Leviticus.	Ezek. = Ezekiel.	Lk. = Luke.
Dt. = Deuteronomy.	Hos. = Hosea.	Rom. = Romans.
Josh. = Joshua.	Am. = Amos.	I Cor. = I Corinthians.
Sam. = Samuel.	Mi. or Mic. = Micah.	I Pet. = I Peter.
Kgs. = Kings.	Nah. = Nahum.	
Chr. = Chronicles.	Hab. = Habbakuk.	
Ps. = Psalms.	Zech. = Zechariah.	
Pr. or Prov. = Proverbs.	Mal. = Malachi.	
Ecc., Ecccl. or Eccles. = Ecclesiastes.	Wisd. Sol. = Wisdom of Solomon.	
Sg. of Sgs. = Song of Songs.	BSir. = Ben Sira, or Sirach.	



## PROVERBS AND DIDACTIC POEMS





## I

### THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN OR SAGES

THE desire to store up and to transmit to each succeeding generation the results of experience was strong in the mind of early man. Having found that a certain course of action brought disaster and another success, he was eager to profit by this hard-won knowledge and to impart it to his kindred and friends. Thus arose the earliest wisdom literature.

The basis of the work of the wise

In the introduction to the *Instruction of Ptah-hotep*, the ancient Egyptian sage states that his purpose was to *speak to his son the words of those who hearken to the counsel of the men of olden time*. Ptah-hotep lived nearly fifty centuries ago, yet he spoke repeatedly of *the counsel of the men of olden time*. These allusions indicate that at this early day there was a large body of maxims embodying the experience of the sages of preceding generations. Ptah-hotep's purpose in transmitting the results of his own practical observation and experience in the form of proverbs to his son and disciples is also clearly stated: it was to *instruct the ignorant in the exact knowledge of fair-speaking*. He adds, *If you heed these things that I have said to you, all your plans will progress*. Like Israel's wisdom teachers, he declares that his teachings are *the glory of him who obeys, and shame of him who fails to keep them*.

Ptah-hotep is an excellent example of the wise men or sages who flourished in Egypt at an early period. The names of several of them have been preserved: Imhotep, Ke'gemni, and Ameneruhe'et. They were the viziers, governors, or kings whose authority and reputation as men of affairs greatly enhanced in the eyes of their own and later generations the value of their practical teachings. About their names have gathered collections of early proverbs. Some undoubtedly came directly from the lips of these famous sages; others were probably gleaned by them or by later editors from *the words of counsel of the men of olden time*. Most of them had been committed to writing by 2000 B.C. They have been preserved because they were set as copy for the pupils in the scribal schools. By a fortunate accident these ancient copy books have survived. In many points their teachings closely resemble those of the Hebrew wise. They deal with duties toward superiors, equals, and inferiors, and the judicious use of the tongue. In general they give practical advice as to how to act prudently in all the different relations of that ancient life. They are more egoistic than social. Class points of view and prejudices are much in evidence. The thought is often crude, but it represents the beginning of that wisdom teaching that reached its culmination on the lips of Jesus, *the greater than Solomon*.

Egyptian wise men

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Teach-  
ings of  
Ptah-  
hotep

Among the more significant teachings of Ptah-hotep are the following:

If you find a wise man in his time, a leader of understanding more excellent than yourself, bend your arms and bow your back.

If you find a wise man in his time, a poor man and not your equal, be not overbearing against him when he is unfortunate.

If you are insignificant, follow an able man and all your proceedings shall be good before the god.

If you are a leader, hear quietly the speech of the petitioner. He who is suffering wrong desires that his heart be cheered to do that on account of which he has come. . . . It is an ornament of the heart to hear kindly.

Established is the man whose standard is righteousness, who walks in its way. He ordinarily makes his fortune thereby, but the avaricious is houseless.

Be not avaricious in dividing. . . . Be not avaricious toward your kinsmen. Greater is the fame of the gentle than the harsh.

Repeat not a word of hearsay.

If you are a strong man, establish respect for yourself by wisdom and by quietness of speech.

If you become great after you were little, and get possessions after you were formerly poor in the city . . . be not proud-hearted because of your wealth. It has come to you as a gift of the god.

Do not practise corruption of children.

Let your face be bright as long as you live.

Wise  
men  
among  
the  
Babyl-  
onians

The quiet, contemplative life of Egypt furnished a congenial atmosphere for the sages. Wit, versatility, and culture were always highly prized by the early Egyptians. The Babylonians, on the contrary, were an active commercial people, more intent on developing their laws and legal institutions than in listening to the teachings of sages. In directing their lives, they also depended not so much on practical maxims and counsel as upon oracles, omens, and magic, or else upon definitely formulated laws. Hence the wise men of Babylon were not the sages but the magicians, the priests, and the lawgivers. There are suggestions, however, that the sages were not entirely lacking in Babylonian life. On the back of one of the creation tablets is a reference to this class:

Let the elder enlighten,

Let the wise, the learned meditate together,

Let the father rehearse, make the son apprehend.

## THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

Also, in the second volume of Assyrian texts edited by Sir Henry Rawlinson are found certain proverbs and riddles that were used in instructing the pupils in the schools of the scribes; but among the hundreds of thousands of inscriptions that have come from the ruins in the Tigris-Euphrates valley only a comparatively few examples of this type of literature have yet been discovered. Pre eminent among these is the noble proverb:

You shall not slander, but speak kindly,  
You shall not speak evil, but show mercy.  
Him who slanders and speaks evil,  
The god, Shamash, will punish.  
You shall not speak unrestrainedly, but guard your lip;  
When you are angry do not speak at once;  
If you speak hastily, you will repent later,  
And in silence will feel remorse.

The Arabian desert was the natural home of the Semitic wise man and his proverbs. The *wisdom of the children of the East* was well known to the editor of Kings (I Kgs. 4<sup>30</sup>). The background of the book of Job is the desert east of the Jordan. Eliphaz, the eldest of Job's friends, comes from the Edomite city of Teman, famous for its wisdom teachers (cf. Jer. 49<sup>7</sup>). The life of the nomad was conducive to meditation. Moreover he was constantly confronted by crises which required quick and prudent action. His unstable mode of living made it necessary for him to make many important decisions. The hard struggle for a livelihood sharpened his wits. Having no settled place of abode, he was obliged to treasure his valuable, hard-won experience in the form of concise, easily remembered proverbs. Hence to-day in Palestine and in all lands under the influence of the Arabian desert proverbs and epigrammatic maxims are constantly upon the lips of the people. Thus, under the old Turkish régime a supernumerary of the Beirut customs office (whom we employed to rescue our books from the storehouse where they had been placed by the customs officials to await the final Judgment Day) when asked whether the usual bribe would have delivered us from all annoyance, replied: "When a man has bread in his mouth he cannot speak." At every turn in the East the apt maxim takes the place of the ordinary direct statement. Men learn instinctively to think and to express their thoughts in the characteristic terms of the ancient wisdom teachers.

The history of the wise in Israel is recorded only in barest outlines through chance references in the historical and prophetic books and in the inferences that may be drawn from the wisdom books themselves. Close proximity and contact with Egypt on the one side and with the life of the Arabian desert on the other undoubtedly gave a great and constant impetus to this peculiar type of thought. Similar conditions and needs in each of these lands also gave rise to similar ideas and forms of teaching. A few proverbs are found in the earliest historical books (e. g., I Sam. 24<sup>13</sup>). Jotham, in his beautiful fable (Judg. 9<sup>8-15</sup>), and Samson, in his famous riddle (Judg. 14<sup>14-18</sup>), employed the literary forms that characterized the teaching of the later wise.

In the days of the united Hebrew commonwealth there were many women

In Arabia and adjacent lands

Wisdom thought in early Israel

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The famous wise women

who were famed for their practical wisdom. David's strong-minded commander, Joab, employed the services of a certain wise woman of Tekoa to aid him in securing the recall of the banished Absalom. By means of a skillfully devised recital of her personal woes she aroused the sympathies of David. After he had committed himself to the principles of mercy rather than of stern justice, she demanded that he apply the same to the case of his own son. Thus she won her point (II Sam. 14<sup>1-21</sup>). Her language has the peculiar flavor of the wisdom teachers and her words reveal a remarkably keen insight into human motives.

Later another wise woman aided Joab. While he was besieging the rebellious city of Abel-beth-maacah, that stood at the head of the Jordan valley, she sought an interview with him and secured favorable terms. Then she went and advised all the people in her wisdom and persuaded them to surrender (II Sam. 20<sup>15-22</sup>).

The wise men in David's court

Absalom's rebellion also brought to the front two counsellors who enjoyed a great reputation for sagacity and skill in giving advice. Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's former adviser, went over to Absalom. The Hebrew historian states that his counsel in those days was as if one inquired of the word of God—so was all the counsel of Ahithophel regarded by David and Absalom (II Sam. 16<sup>23</sup>). By appealing to the pride and fear of Absalom, Hushai, David's other counsellor and faithful friend, succeeded in thwarting the wiser counsels of Ahithophel. Chagrin because his advice was rejected drove Ahithophel to deliberate suicide.

Solomon's wisdom

In a court where practical wisdom was esteemed thus highly Solomon was reared. His close alliance with Egypt may also have strengthened his ambition to become famous as a wise man. To judge from the traditions that survive, his wisdom was of the type that from earliest times had been highly prized in the Arabian desert and in the land of the Nile. It represented sagacity, insight, and clear judgment. It is well illustrated by the familiar story of the method by which Solomon determined who was the real mother of the baby that the contending mothers brought before him (I Kgs. 3<sup>16-28</sup>). The life of the Arabian desert presents many striking parallels. Two women were brought before a famous judge among the Arabs, charged with shamelessness. After listening to the charge, the judge pronounced the following sentence: *Let her who is innocent of this charge throw aside her garment and stand before me naked.* One woman unhesitatingly carried out the terms of the sentence. The other cast herself to the ground before the judge, crying, *Slay me instead.* It requires no imagination to determine which woman was declared innocent. According to the editor of Kings, Solomon's wisdom differed from that of Egypt and the Arabians not in character but degree. There is not the slightest evidence that it had an ethical, social, or religious quality. It was in harmony with his splendor-loving, superficial character. Although he enjoyed the reputation of being the wisest man of his day, his tyrannical, disastrous policy wrought only ruin for himself and his nation. He was sadly lacking in the deeper moral and spiritual qualities that were essential to a really wise rule. In fact he proved one of the most foolish rulers that ever sat on the throne of Israel.



## THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

In the days of the Babylonian exile, when the editor of the book of Kings lived, the tradition was current that Solomon was the author of three thousand proverbs and at least five hundred songs. The tradition also adds that he spoke of different varieties of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, of birds, of creeping things, and of fishes. In the light of the maxims found in the book of Proverbs (e. g., 6<sup>5</sup>, 6-8) it is probable that the reference is to the comparisons drawn from the characteristics of plants and animals. There is no valid reason for concluding that Solomon was a pioneer in modern scientific research. His proverbs, like the peculiar type of wisdom for which he was famous, doubtless resembled closely the secular proverbs which have come down from the early Egyptian sages. In the light of recent discoveries it is not improbable that he not only imported an Egyptian wife, but proverbs as well from the land of the Nile. According to I Kings 10<sup>22</sup> his policy was to bring into Israel all kinds of foreign products. His reputation for worldly wisdom, his fame as a framer of proverbs and songs, and the dazzling splendor of his court fully explain why later generations regarded him as the author not only of the book of Proverbs, but of most of the wisdom books of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. Moses, David, Solomon, and Isaiah represent respectively the legal, psalm, wisdom, and prophetic literature of the Old Testament. To them were attributed practically all later anonymous writings. The prestige of their names was thus used to give authority to these late books. It is possible that some of Solomon's proverbs have found a place in the book of Proverbs, although it is not demonstrable. It is certain that the great majority of them came from later and more spiritually minded sages who lived in the light of the noble teachings of prophets like Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Solomon's reputation as a proverb writer

Only a few references are found to the wise during the period of the divided Hebrew states, but these few are significant. While Isaiah stood practically alone in the wars of 705-701 B.C. in opposing rebellion against Assyria, he declares in the name of Jehovah:

The wise before the exile

I will proceed to do a thing so wonderful and astonishing,  
That the wisdom of the wise men shall perish.

The reference is to the catastrophe that was soon to fall upon Judah at the hands of the Assyrians. Evidently the wise men of Isaiah's day were, like Ahithophel and Hushai, the advisers of rulers and people. Their functions are still political and secular, and at times they resorted to political policies which the prophet did not approve.

The same opposition existed in Jeremiah's day:

How can ye say, "We are wise and the teaching of Jehovah is with us"?  
But, behold, the deceptive pen of the scribes has rendered it deceptive.  
The wise men are put to shame, they are dismayed and taken!  
They reject the word of Jehovah, and what wisdom have they?

Here the contrast is strongly drawn between that human wisdom, based on observation and experience, which was the possession of the early sages and

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

the messages of the prophets who were inspired by a sense of the divine presence and command. The fundamental point on which Jeremiah differed from the wise men of his day appears to have been in regard to the national policy. If so, it indicates that the wise still confined their attention chiefly to questions of state. In one important passage in Jeremiah they are brought into clear comparison with the other classes of Israel's teachers. It is in connection with the popular attempts to silence Jeremiah. His assailants urge that, if they put him to death, *teaching will not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet* (18<sup>18</sup>). As in the days of Ahithophel, *counsel* is the peculiar contribution of the wise, and there is no evidence that it was concerned with anything except questions of state and the practical problems of daily life.

Their strength and limitations

In Ezekiel 7<sup>26</sup> the same three classes of teachers are again spoken of together, but the term *elders* is substituted for *the wise*. The reference confirms the conclusion that the pre-exilic wise as a rule, like the sages of Egypt and in the court of David, were men not only of maturity but also of authority in the state. Their position gave them unusual opportunities for studying life and for developing intelligent, practical judgment. It also imparted great weight to their utterances, so that, like the words of Ahithophel, they were regarded as of almost equal authority with the divine oracles. The evidence is also clear that in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah the people frequently followed the counsel of the wise, disregarding the prophetic teachings; but before the sages could wisely guide mankind they had to gain, in the painful school of sorrow, a deeper insight into truth and the inspiration of a nobler moral purpose.

Influence of the Babylonian exile on the wise

The Babylonian exile cut athwart all of Israel's life and institutions. Among the many changes that it effected was a fundamental transformation of the aims and methods of the sages. With the destruction of the Hebrew monarchy and national independence, the political problems, which hitherto had largely engrossed the attention of the wise, suddenly vanished. As a result, they turned their attention from the rulers and powerful leaders of their race to the individual, to the common man of the street, and to the children who were to be the ancestors of the rising generations. No individual nor problem, however humble, was beyond the circle of their interest and sympathy. Thus, the advisers of rulers became the counsellors of the needy and tempted. Instead of race or class interest, love for mankind became the guiding motives for the work of the later sages. The exile and all the woes which followed in its train had softened the hearts of these alert, brilliant leaders of the Jewish race. Henceforth a strong ethical and religious note characterizes all of their teaching. Narrow racial points of view and interests disappear. It is significant that Israel is not once mentioned in the book of Proverbs. It is to man they speak, and especially to youth, to men and women in the making.

The period of their greatest activity

Henceforth the social and religious teachings of the prophets, which the earlier sages had rejected, were accepted as the foundation upon which they built. The principles which the earlier prophets had proclaimed to the nation were by these later teachers interpreted in terms clearly intelligible to

## THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

the young and ignorant, and were made the guides in the development of individual character. Also in the days following the exile the priests largely ceased to be teachers of the people and devoted themselves to the details of the ritual. The voice of the prophets was also heard less and less. The result was that the sages assumed the task of the earlier teachers. From the middle of the Persian period (about 450 B.C.) until the Maccabean struggle (169 to 165 B.C.), which introduced an entirely new epoch in Israel's history, the Jewish sages were the chief social, ethical, and spiritual guides of their race. To their patient, tireless, self-sacrificing work is largely due the preservation of Israel's faith during these critical years. They indeed saved the soul of Judaism and prepared it for the new crisis which came during the Maccabean struggle. They also bore on the torch of Hebrew learning, which they in turn handed over to the scribes and rabbis, who from 165 B.C. on became the chief teachers of the race. To the rabbis they imparted that profound interest in the individual and that emphasis on social and moral values which partially delivered the work and writings of these later teachers from the blight of triviality and ceremonialism.

The Jewish wise men or sages were not a caste like the priests, nor did they, like the prophets, feel a direct, divine call to their work. Keen, sympathetic observation and broad experience were their teachers. Most of them appear to have been men of mature years when they began to teach. The motive which impelled them was their deep interest in the welfare of society and especially of the youth with whom they came into contact.

Source  
of their  
author-  
ity

The first six verses of the first chapter of the book of Proverbs contain a remarkably clear statement of their aims. They were concerned in imparting information and wisdom to the ignorant with the end that they might live wisely and uprightly. They also aimed to develop discretion in the young and inexperienced. Finally they sought to inspire and direct their intelligent disciples that they might increase in learning and be able to understand and appropriate the teachings of the wise. Their ultimate aim, therefore, was to develop intelligent, prudent, and efficient men and women, and in so doing to lay the foundations for a perfect social order.

Their  
aims

The wise were primarily teachers rather than preachers. Ordinarily their disciples appear to have sought them out in their homes or in the temple courts, where they probably, like the later scribes, were to be found teaching the circle of eager disciples who gathered close about them. Ben Sira has given us a vivid picture of the ideal of the pupil in the school of the wise:

Places  
where  
they  
taught

Stand in the assembly of the elders,  
And whoever is wise, cleave to him,  
Desire to hear every discourse,  
And let not a wise proverb escape you.

Look for him who is wise and seek him out earnestly,  
And let your foot wear out his threshold (6<sup>34-36</sup>).

Ordinarily the Hebrew sages appear to have taught their disciples in the open spaces beside the city gates where old and young were gathered together to discuss public and private questions.



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Obstacles in their path

Sometimes their intense zeal to reach the ignorant and unreceptive led them to adopt the methods of the prophet and address the assembled throng:

Wisdom cries aloud in the streets,  
Raises her voice in the open places.  
On the top of the walls she calls,  
At the entrance of the city gates she says:  
"How long, O ignorant, will you love ignorance,  
And scoffers delight in their scoffing,  
And the stupid hate knowledge?" (Pr. 1<sup>20-22</sup>).

Ordinarily the eastern world is highly appreciative of the teachings of its sages, but these and many other references in the book of Proverbs indicate that the Jewish wise men were often confronted by indifference or contemptuous disregard for the pearls of wisdom which they cast so freely before their disciples. For that reason the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs are devoted to an earnest commendation of the teaching of the wise. They realized that the first essential was to create a receptive attitude in the minds of their disciples, and a clear appreciation of the practical value of the wisdom which they were striving to inculcate.

Principles underlying their work

The Jewish sages anticipated many of the principles which are regarded as fundamental in modern education. Their profound teaching:

Train up a child in the way he should go,  
And when he is old he will not depart from it (Pr. 22<sup>6</sup>),

is the basis of the modern religious education movement. To the parents they intrusted the education of their children. The sages devoted much of their time and attention to training parents, that these responsible guardians of childhood might be qualified for their task. The earnestness with which the wise urged parents not to spare the rod reveals how important they deemed that task. The wise appear to have devoted their attention primarily to adolescent youth. From the age of about twelve, the sensible and well-nurtured Jewish boy began to sit at the feet of the sages, who taught:

Walk with the wise and you will be wise,  
But he who associates with fools shall smart for it (Pr. 13<sup>20</sup>).

Before their disciples they set up the lofty ideal:

A wise man is better than a strong man,  
And a man who has knowledge than he who has strength (Pr. 24<sup>6</sup>).

Meaning of the Hebrew word wisdom

Wisdom represented in the thought of the sages the goal of all education. The word comes from a Semitic root which means in the Assyrian *to know*, and in the Arabic *to be firm, fixed, free from defect*. In the teaching of the Hebrew wise it represents not only knowledge, but also the power to gain knowledge and to use it skilfully and effectively. Thus in Isaiah 3<sup>3</sup> and Ezekiel 27<sup>8</sup> the Hebrew word *wise* describes a man skilled in technical work.

## THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

In Genesis 41<sup>33, 39</sup>, II Samuel 14<sup>20</sup>, and elsewhere, it describes a man skilled in administering public affairs; in II Samuel 13<sup>3</sup>, one who is shrewd and cunning in dealing with men; while throughout the book of Proverbs it is the designation of a man who in all his public and private acts is governed by the highest religious and ethical principles. With the wise the mere acquisition of knowledge was never an end in itself. They aimed to make men rather than human encyclopædias. Their disciples were tested alone by their fruits.

The sages also taught that God was the supreme Teacher:

The  
divine  
teacher

My son, reject not the instruction of Jehovah,  
And do not weary of his reproof;  
For whom he loveth he reproveth,  
Even as a father the son in whom he delights (Pr. 3<sup>11, 12</sup>).

Moreover, they taught that religion is the foundation of all wisdom:

The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom,  
But fools despise wisdom and instruction (Pr. 1<sup>7</sup>).

The phrase *fear of Jehonah*, here, in the Psalms, and in later Jewish literature, is equivalent to our modern term *religion*. It is significant, therefore, that the sages placed this fundamental principle at the beginning of the book of Proverbs. They were intensely interested in all that concerned the well-being and development of the individual; but education which was not truly religious had in their eyes no value nor attraction.

The Jewish sages aimed in the book of Proverbs to hold up before their disciples a composite portrait of an ideal man. It is not an impossible, wishy-washy saint that they have here portrayed, but a man of red blood and practical ability. He is a faithful husband, free from the vices of intemperance and social immorality, devoted to his wife and the interests of the household. All men find in him a true friend, a wise counsellor, a forgiving foe, a neighbor charitable toward others' faults. He is an upright, diligent, and effective business man who enjoys the respect of the community and well-deserved prosperity. He is a just and considerate official, actively championing and protecting the weak and defenseless. He is well informed, gifted with keen insight, and genuinely interested in his fellow men. He is always generous toward the needy and helpful to those in distress and trouble. Above all he is sane, well balanced, and guided by a simple, strong faith in God and by the desire to be loyal in every thought and act to his divine Friend. The abiding happiness is his which comes through living a normal, upright life. The portrait is well worthy of careful study and thoughtful imitation.

The  
ideal  
man as  
por-  
trayed  
in the  
book of  
Prov-  
erbs

In a very true sense the Jewish sages were the pioneers who prepared the way for the later Christian education movement. Jesus recognized this debt when he declared in speaking of himself, that a greater than Solomon is here (Mt. 12<sup>42</sup>). Also, in his reply to the charge that he mingled freely with all classes, he maintained: *Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds* (Lk. 7<sup>35</sup>).

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Jesus' attitude toward the teachings of the wise

There are many indications that Jesus was a close and appreciative student of the wisdom literature of his race. His interest, like that of the sages, centred not in the nation, nor in certain classes, but in the individual. His aims and those of the Jewish wise men were practically identical. At many points the great Teacher reiterated or emphasized the principles already laid down by these earlier teachers (cf., e. g., Mt. 5<sup>42</sup> and Pr. 8<sup>28</sup>). His teaching that *whoever shall give a cup of water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose his reward* (Mt. 10<sup>42</sup>) is but a more personal and vivid declaration of the great truth embodied in Proverbs 19<sup>17</sup>:

He who has pity on the poor lends to Jehovah,  
And his good deed will he repay him.

Jesus taught in Matthew 6<sup>25</sup> and elsewhere the filial attitude of trust expressed in the noble Proverb (16<sup>3</sup>):

Commit your works unto Jehovah,  
And your purposes shall be established.

Many of Jesus' figures of speech are taken from the lips of the earlier wise. Thus, for example, his figure of the way (Mt. 7<sup>13, 14</sup>) constantly recurs in the book of Proverbs (e. g., 4<sup>26</sup>, 6<sup>22</sup>, 8<sup>32, 34</sup>, 9<sup>6</sup>). The germinal ideas and figures that appear in many of Jesus' familiar parables are found in Proverbs. Thus, for example, the parable of the two houses, the one built on the sand and the other on the rock, is suggested by Proverbs 10<sup>25</sup> (cf. 12<sup>7</sup>):

When the whirlwind passes the wicked ■ no more,  
But the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

The Christian book of Proverbs

The epistle of James has rightly been called the Christian book of Proverbs. It is not an epistle, but a loosely connected collection of wise maxims inspired by the principles that Jesus proclaimed and the spirit of love and democracy that he infused into his followers.

## II

### THE LITERARY ACTIVITY OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN OR SAGES

ISRAEL'S wise men or sages were primarily teachers and not writers. In the earlier days they apparently depended wholly upon oral instruction and aimed to impress their teachings directly upon the minds of their disciples. To this end they put these teachings in such compact literary moulds that they could be easily treasured in the memory. They also had in mind the immediate needs of the ignorant and inexperienced with whom they came into personal contact. It was only in the mature and more contemplative period of their activity that the wise as a class committed their teachings to writing

Early wisdom oral not written

Possibly the earliest literary form in which the wise set forth their teaching was the similitude or comparison. The Hebrew word for proverb (*māshāl*) means *to put things side by side, that is, to make a comparison*. It is closely related to the Greek-derived word *parable* which describes the presentation of a thought by means of an illustration or story. *Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord* (Gen. 10<sup>9</sup>) is perhaps the oldest fragment of wisdom literature in the Old Testament. Proverbs 25<sup>25</sup> contains a characteristic proverb that is the outgrowth of the tendency to present an important truth in terms of common physical experience:

Comparison earliest literary form

As cold water to a thirsty man,  
So is good news from a far country.

The proverb is the basal literary unit in all wisdom literature. It presents in the most concise and epigrammatic form the crystallized results of experience. A popular proverb possesses authority because it is the outgrowth of common experience and has the indorsement of the successive generations that have preserved it. Its transmission from mouth to mouth subjected it to a constant process of attrition, which in time wore away all needless words and tended to give it a compact, epigrammatic form. This process is illustrated in the case of certain proverbs which have been preserved both in their older, more verbose, and in their later, more concise form. The older Hebrew literature contains a few examples of the one-line proverb, as for example the proverb of the ancients, which David quotes in I Samuel 24<sup>13</sup>: *From the wicked comes forth wickedness.* But all of the proverbs found in the wisdom books of the Old Testament are poetic in form. Poetry was the most natural medium for conveying thought among all primitive peoples. Rhythm of sound or thought is ever an efficient aid to the memory. Further-

Proverb the outgrowth of experience



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

more, the presentation of the practical teaching in dual form tended to emphasize and make clear the thought.

Origin of  
prov-  
erbs

The majority of the biblical proverbs are orphans. The origin of most of them is unrecorded. A few of them, like the proverb, *Is Saul among the prophets?* clearly go back to some historic incident (cf. I Sam. 10<sup>10-12</sup> and 19<sup>18-24</sup>). Some were probably first presented in the form of riddles. Thus, for example, Proverbs 16<sup>24</sup> may well have been suggested by the question, *What is as sweet as honey?* and its answer, *Pleasant discourse, for it is sweet to the soul and medicine to the bones.* Proverbs 22<sup>1</sup>, with its emphasis on the value of a good name, may go back to the question, *What is worth more than riches?* Similarly the question, *What is like seizing a dog by the ears?* may originally have introduced the answer, *Meddling with a quarrel not your own.* The great majority, however, of the maxims in the book of Proverbs, clearly come from the lips of once famous, but now unknown sages. In many proverbs the language reflects the point of view of these venerable teachers:

My son, if you are wise I shall be glad,  
I shall rejoice when you speak right things.  
Buy the truth and sell it not,  
Wisdom, instruction, and understanding (23<sup>16</sup>, 23).

Use of  
paradox

The sages knew the value of presenting their teachings in a striking, thought-provoking form. Like Jesus, they appreciated the value of the paradox. Thus in Proverbs 26<sup>4, 5</sup> they developed the paradox by putting two proverbs together. Each contained a valuable teaching, and yet, when placed side by side, they seem to present a direct contradiction. The reader in explaining this seeming contradiction would inevitably have fixed in his mind the truth conveyed by each:

Answer not a fool according to his folly,  
Lest you also become like him.  
Answer a fool according to his folly,  
Lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Gnomic  
essays

Notwithstanding the limitations of the gnomic type of literature, the wise succeeded in discussing the important questions in which they were interested with remarkable thoroughness. They accomplished this end by putting side by side proverbs dealing with the same theme. Each verse or couplet is a unit by itself, and yet together they present the practical conclusions of the sages on such themes as the proper treatment of the fool (Pr. 26<sup>1-12</sup>), the characteristics and fate of the lazy man (26<sup>13-17</sup>), or the woes which attend the drunkard (23<sup>29-35</sup>). In Proverbs 31<sup>10-31</sup> the characteristics of the efficient housewife are set forth in a beautiful, alphabetical poem. In the same way in the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs the value of wisdom is proclaimed in a series of what might be called gnomic essays.

Book of  
Eccle-  
siastes

The next stage in the development of the wisdom literature is illustrated by the book of Ecclesiastes. Here the question of what is worth while is discussed both from the practical and philosophical point of view. While much

## LITERARY ACTIVITY OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

of the thought is set forth in proverbial form, the author refuses to be bound down by the proverb unit. *Philosophical essay or homily* perhaps best describes this product of late Jewish wisdom.

The culminating literary product of the wise is the book of Job. Here the gnomic unit used is combined in such a masterly way that the profoundest and most difficult problems of human philosophy are treated with amazing thoroughness. Different speakers are introduced to set forth the many different interpretations of the problem of innocent suffering. The whole is suffused with a personal, emotional element. The result is the greatest lyric drama of antiquity.

Wisdom literature at its height

The most typical product of the wisdom school is the book of Proverbs. This elaborate anthology is in reality a library in itself. Its various superscriptions suggest its long literary history. The chief and probably the oldest section of the book is found in 10<sup>1</sup>-22<sup>16</sup>. It bears the superscription, *These are the Proverbs of Solomon*. They deal with the social evils denounced by prophets like Amos and Isaiah.

The book of Proverbs

Many references to a king, who is thought of as a native ruler, imply that certain, if not a majority, of these proverbs come from a period before the Babylonian exile while the Jews were still ruled by men of their own race. The absence of any reference to the exile confirms that impression. On the other hand, the absence of any allusions to idolatry and the presence of a class of scoffers suggest that many of them come from after the exile and that the collection as a whole was not made before the latter part of the Persian or the early part of the Greek period.

Its date

The appendices in 22<sup>17</sup>-24<sup>34</sup> are not attributed to Solomon, but to the wise men as a class. The inference is that they come from a later period than the preceding collection. The term *proverb of Solomon* (cf. *psalm of David*) apparently describes a proverb which came from an early period, and was therefore attributed by popular belief to the early Hebrew ruler who was famous for his wisdom. The expansion of this tradition is illustrated by the fact that in the final superscription appended to the Proverbs (1<sup>1</sup>) the entire book is described as, *The Proverbs of Solomon*, even though this testimony is belied by the contents of the proverbs themselves and by the direct statement of the superscriptions found within the book. The appendices in 22<sup>17</sup>-24<sup>34</sup> contain many repetitions of maxims found in the larger collection. This fact indicates that these later collections were gleaned in part from the same field. The allusions to commercial life, to the exiled Jews, and to the wide prevalence of intemperance point to the Greek period as the probable date when these smaller collections were added.

Divisions and authorship

New light upon the origin of certain biblical proverbs, and especially those in 22<sup>17</sup>-24<sup>34</sup>, has come from the ruins of ancient Egypt. In 1923 Sir Wallis Budge published in the *Second Series of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri* an Egyptian wisdom book, entitled, *The Teaching of Amenemope*, which may be dated about 1000 B. C. It is divided into thirty chapters and consists of popular proverbs. From a writing-tablet preserved in the Turin Museum we know that it was used as a text-book in the Egyptian schools twenty-five hundred years ago. The most interesting fact, however, is that nine of these proverbs

Egyptian origin of certain proverbs

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

are as Professor Adolph Erman has pointed out in the May, 1924, report of the Prussian *Academie der Wissenschaft*, almost word for word identical with maxims found in the biblical book of Proverbs. Seven of these are in the appendices in Proverbs 22<sup>17</sup>-24<sup>34</sup>, indicating that these later collections were probably made by a Jew living in Egypt during the Greek period, who drew freely from the famous wisdom of the Egyptians.

The finest proverbs in the book are found in chapters 25-29. The superscription states that these proverbs were transcribed by the scribes of Hezekiah, king of Judah, but they still bear the traditional title, *Proverbs of Solomon*. The word meaning to transcribe is found only in late Hebrew. Its presence implies that the superscription is not earlier than the Greek period. The rulers who figure in these proverbs are oppressors rather than champions of the people, suggesting Persian or Greek, rather than Jewish, potentates. The literary form of these proverbs is also more complex than the simple couplets found in the first large collection (10<sup>1</sup>-22<sup>16</sup>). The earlier part of the Greek period is probably the historical background of most of them.

To this collection or collections were added in later days the preface contained in 12-6, the elaborate prologue in 17-9, describing wisdom, and finally the long appendices in chapters 30 and 31. The corrupt city life reflected in the prologue and the philosophical proverbs and Aramaisms that appear in the appendices indicate that they all probably come from the latter part of the Greek period, although probably from different writers and editors.

The book of Proverbs, therefore, represents the growth of five or six centuries. Possibly some of the maxims actually come from Solomon. Many of the proverbs in this section were probably long current on the lips of people before they were collected and edited. It is doubtful whether any part of the book was committed to writing before the exile. Then it took form in successive collections. Proverbs in its final form may be dated about 200 B.C. It represents not the work of one, but probably a score at least, if not a hundred or more different writers. It is the great storehouse of Israel's practical wisdom, but like the Koran and many other products of oriental thought, its contents must be classified before they can be successfully studied and utilized by modern western students.

Chapters 25-29

Later additions

Summary



### III

## THE HISTORY AND POINT OF VIEW OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

The sensation in passing from the book of Proverbs to Ecclesiastes is akin to that which one experiences when he steps out of a brilliant, oriental sunset into a dimly lighted, mysterious subterranean passage. Teachings which have seemed obvious and firmly established suddenly become vague and uncertain. Dark doubts and an atmosphere of pessimism confront the reader on every side. The problems which haunt the pages of Omar Khayyam, Schopenhauer, and the Russian pessimists are constantly being presented for consideration.

Its atmosphere

Yet few Old Testament books have made a deeper impression on English literature and thought than Ecclesiastes. The French scholar Renan declared that it was the most charming book ever written by a Jew. Its fascination lies in part in the very fact that it belongs to that literature of pessimism and revolt which has always had a unique attraction for certain types of mind. Above all it lays bare the tragedy of a human soul unilluminated by spiritual insight nor warmed by unselfish service. The author also has a forceful, epigrammatic manner of presenting his conclusions, which goes far to explain why his teachings have been more widely quoted than those of almost any other Old Testament teacher.

The fascination of the book

The problems discussed in the book of Ecclesiastes are also of perennial human interest. Of all the Old Testament wisdom writings, it approximates most nearly in its point of view to that of the Greek philosophical literature. The author seeks to face squarely the whole of reality. He struggled valiantly with the problem of what is of value in human life. He even rises to the consideration of the ever-recurring question of whether life itself is really worth living. At the very beginning he states his pessimistic thesis: *All is vanity*. In succession he presents his negative conclusions regarding the various sources that are supposed to yield satisfaction.

Its theme

It is not strange that the book of Ecclesiastes was the last to find a place in the Old Testament canon. The surprising fact is that it was included at all. It is known that Antiochus the Great became king of Syria when only seven, and in 198 B.C. wrested Palestine from Ptolemy V. If these identifications are correct, 10<sup>16</sup>, 17 expresses the enthusiasm of the Jews over this transfer of power to Antiochus. It also suggests, as a definite date for Ecclesiastes, the years immediately following 200 B.C. This dating is in perfect accord with the other evidence.

Date

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The historical background

The last half of the third and the first half of the second century B.C. was the darkest and most corrupt period in the history of the Jews of Palestine. Their home-land was the bone of contention between the rival rulers of Egypt and Syria. Drunkenness and licentiousness were regnant in the court of Egypt, and the favorites of irresponsible despots preyed on the people of Palestine. Jewish tax-collectors, like Joseph the son of Tobias, fattened upon their fellow countrymen and made their profession loathsome to the Jews. It was a selfish, sordid age, and the helpless Jews of Palestine saw only the corrupt and seamy side of Hellenistic civilization. This dreary background is reflected in the writings of the original author of Ecclesiastes. It also goes far to explain the hopeless pessimism that pervades the sections that come from his pen.

Personality of Koheleth

The personality of the author of Ecclesiastes is clearly revealed in his writings. He either bore the name or assumed the title Koheleth. The word means one who calls together or addresses a popular assembly. Whatever be his faults, Koheleth was certainly frank. In his revelations of his inner experiences, he rivals the modern realists. It is the frankness of old age, which has left behind all the pretenses and ideals of youthful years. His description of the failing powers of old age is one of the most brilliant passages in the world's literature and could have been written only by one who was witnessing the dissolution of his physical vigor. The peculiar quality of his pessimism is also that of extreme old age. As has been noted, it is not an attitude of bitterness, but one of calm hopelessness. It is the philosophy of physical weakness. The mere thought of toil and struggle tires him. His mind, however, is active, for his book abounds in brilliant epigrams.

His experiences

It is evident from 2<sup>1-8</sup> that he had great wealth and had used it throughout his long life chiefly for his personal gratification. He knew, too, by bitter experience the limitations of money. He had learned that *the satiety of the rich does not let him sleep* (5<sup>12</sup>). Also that *the eye is never satisfied with riches* (4<sup>8</sup>). Evidently his selfish policy had won for him no friends. Even his domestic life appears to have been a tragedy. On rare occasions in his varied life he had found a true man, but never a faithful woman (7<sup>28</sup>). Sadly he exclaims: *I found something more bitter than death—a woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands are fetters* (7<sup>26</sup>). Possibly the sequel is a part of his philosophical autobiography, *Whoever pleases God shall escape her; but the sinner shall be taken by her*, or it may be the sarcastic addition of a later sage. In any case, it is probably a true reflection of Koheleth's experience.

His aim in writing

Koheleth tells without reservation or apology of his selfish pursuit of pleasure and of his unrestrained self-indulgence, but of one fact he is proud: he never lost his head: *my wisdom remained with me* (2<sup>9</sup>). Withal it is not an admirable character that is here revealed, but it is consistent and a typical product of the corrupt, materialistic third century before Christ.

Ecclesiastes is the most dramatic, as well as the saddest, book in the Bible. Koheleth, with one foot in the grave and with his physical energies flickering like a burnt-out wick, writes, even though all toil for him is painful, that he may pass on to youth the results of his experience, negative though they are. There is no doubt about his purpose: he desired to warn man not to

## HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

expect much in life. He believed that he who anticipates nothing has no disappointments. Also he had a positive purpose. He had found that certain experiences, such as constructive work, yield a passing pleasure. Likewise youth has certain joys that are beyond the grasp of old age. His advice, therefore, is to enjoy the valid pleasures that each stage in life offers, and not to wait, as many do, until it is forever too late.

Most of the Old Testament books are shot through with a strongly personal element. This lyrical quality is a large part of their charm. Preeminently is this true of Ecclesiastes. It is a journal intime. In a series of loosely connected essays, Koheleth gives the results of his own personal observation and experience. Some of the brilliant proverbs, with which his writings are freely interspersed, are of his own coinage; others were evidently gleaned from the storehouse of the wise. The style passes easily from prose to poetry. These didactic essays culminate in the brilliant poem descriptive of youth and old age in 11<sup>2</sup>-12<sup>8</sup>. In a series of vivid pictures he portrays the gradual disintegration of man's material habitation until at last comes the final collapse and the oriental mourners go up and down the street, raising their shrill cries of lamentation.

Literary character of Ecclesiastes

Koheleth's thought is cast in Jewish moulds, and yet he breaks away from many of the accepted points of view of Judaism. His approach to the problems of the universe reveals the Greek atmosphere in which he lived. In certain respects he anticipates modern scientific methods. He accepts nothing on the basis of authority. He trusts only his own observation and experience. He recognizes the fixed order of the universe and the reign of unchanging laws (14-11, 31-11, 85-9). But to his aged, wearied eyes, these laws and the tireless, unvarying action of natural forces, bring not joy and confidence, but only ennui. He does not question God's existence and infinite power, but he finds in the merciless mechanism of nature no evidence of divine love and no opportunity for fellowship and co-operation with him. His religion is even colder and more cheerless than that of the modern mechanistic materialist, for he believed that God had put ignorance in men's minds, so that they cannot find out from the beginning to the end the work that God is doing.

Koheleth's idea of God and of the universe

Human life and organized society, as he viewed them, are equally unsatisfying. Men strive and toil instinctively for riches, knowledge, honor, and happiness, but in the end all these quests are fruitless. Society, too, is ruled by injustice and might, not right, as a rule prevails (82-15).

Koheleth's jaundiced view of life is largely due to his lack of any belief in personal immortality. In this, as in other respects, he is a forerunner of those staunch conservatives, the Sadducees, who held with their forefathers that there was no joyous life or development beyond the grave. For the fate of man and of beasts is the same: as the one dies, so the other dies—all go to one place; all are from the dust and all return to dust (31<sup>9</sup>, 20). Having no appreciation of the sacredness or possibilities of human personality, Koheleth deems the dead, *who know absolutely nothing*, happier than those involved in the turmoil of life (42). It was to present a far different and nobler view that the apocryphal book entitled, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, was written.

No belief in personal immortality

Like every constitutional pessimist, Koheleth seems to take a certain grim



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Things  
worth  
while

delight in painting life in its darkest colors. Grudgingly he admits, however, that it offers certain satisfactions which men should enjoy, as insects do the sunshine on a spring day. Nowhere does he recommend dissipation, for in the end it destroys rather than adds to a man's pleasure. Evidently he was influenced by the inherited morality as well as the religion of his race. The natural pleasures of youth, the joy of work and of married life are what he commends, for they have at least a temporary value. *Go, eat your food with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God hath already approved your doing so. Let your garments be always white, and let not your head lack oil. Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of the vain life which God gives you under the sun, for it is your portion in life and the reward of your toil under the sun (9<sup>7-9</sup>).*

Sources  
of Kohe-  
leth's  
philoso-  
phy

Earlier interpreters of Ecclesiastes traced many of its ideas to the influence of the Stoic and Epicurean schools of Greek thought. There may have been such indirect influences, for Palestine in the third century B.C. was saturated with Hellenic culture; but it is evident that Koheleth was more directly influenced by the older Babylonian philosophy from which both of these great schools drew many of their ideas. The closest parallel to Ecclesiastes is found in the old Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, which may be dated about 2000 B.C. It is addressed to the national hero:

O Gilgamesh, fill indeed your belly,  
Day and night be joyful,  
Daily ordain gladness,  
Day and night rage and make merry,  
Let your garments be bright,  
Purify your head, bathe with water,  
Desire your children which your hand possesses,  
Enjoy a wife in your bosom,  
Peaceably do your work (cf. Barton, *Eccles.* 39, 40)

The  
later  
revision  
of Ec-  
cle-  
siastes

A philosophy which departed as widely as did that of Koheleth from the religion of his race and from the testimony of deeper spiritual experience could not stand unchallenged. Ecclesiastes in its present form confirms this conclusion. Certain earlier interpreters regarded it as the record of an ancient discussion regarding the real values in life similar to the debates between the rabbis recorded in the Talmud. In a sense this is true; but there is no evidence that Koheleth ever sat in the presence of his critics. Evidently his *silver cord was snapped and the golden bowl was broken* before they turned upon him. Possibly all this was in keeping with the deliberate intention of this brilliant cynic. It was inevitable that his pessimistic and, to a large extent, false philosophy of life should be attacked from many sides. Fully one-fourth of the present book records these attacks. Sometimes it is only a line denying pointblank one of Koheleth's extreme assertions. Sometimes it is in the form of elaborate poems describing the value of that wisdom which Koheleth rejected as only of secondary value (cf. 7<sup>11, 12</sup>, 9<sup>17-10<sup>3</sup></sup>, 10<sup>8-15</sup>).

## HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Certain of these apparently contain very pointed arraignments of Koheleth and his pessimistic philosophy:

The words of the wise spoken quietly  
Are more effective than the loud cry of an arch-fool!  
Wisdom is better than weapons,  
But one sinner destroys much good.  
A dead fly corrupts the perfumer's ointment,  
So a little folly destroys precious wisdom (9<sup>17</sup>-10<sup>1</sup>).

~~These comments evidently come from later sages. Others were added by Pharisaic moralists. They reflect a more orthodox, formal philosophy of life: Because the sentence of an evil deed is not promptly executed, men are inclined to do wrong. But although a sinner does wrong persistently and goes on unpunished, I know that good fortune will come to those who revere God, but not to the wicked (8<sup>11</sup>, 12).~~

Even the words, *Remember your creator in the days of your youth* (12<sup>1</sup>), give an altogether different turn to Koheleth's original teaching. Ben Sira knew the book of Ecclesiastes before it had been revised by the hands of later sages and Pharisees (cf. Barton, *Eccles.* 53-56); but to the contributions of these more orthodox critics it doubtless largely owes its place in the Old Testament canon.

~~The truth and value of these later comments and exhortations are obvious. The original sections of Ecclesiastes, however, lay bare the tragedy of a human soul. It is an oft-recurring tragedy. It is the tragedy of a life lived under the tyranny of materialism and selfishness. It illustrates the fatal consequences of the wrong approach to life, to humanity, and to God. Koheleth never found life, because he never lost it. He remained to the end a once-born man. Therefore, except for his brilliant thinking, he never rose above the level of the brute. There is not a grain of altruism in the entire book. Lacking altruism himself, he saw only the dark and seamy side of human character and life. Like many others, he was abnormally keen in detecting his own faults incarnate in others.~~

Ecclesiastes enables us to look into the souls of thousands of our fellow men. It also gives us a vivid picture of the consequences of giving free rein to similar tendencies innate in our own souls. Its value lies in the fact that vividly and with absolute frankness it presents the logical, inevitable results of cherishing a merely materialistic, selfish philosophy of life. Koheleth furnishes an excellent basis for the appreciation of the optimistic teachings of Ben Sira and of that deeper philosophy of life lived and proclaimed by the great Teacher of Nazareth.

The religious value of Ecclesiastes

## IV

### BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

The  
title

ALTHOUGH it is not included in the present volume,\* the longest and in many ways the most interesting of the wisdom books comes from the Jewish sage, Ben Sira. It is commonly known as *Ecclesiasticus*. This name comes from the old Latin Bible and was used by Jerome in his Latin version. The title indicates that it was regarded by the early church as especially adapted to use for instruction in conduct. Indeed, its use in the *ecclesia* or church gave it this distinctive title. In most Greek manuscripts it is designated as, *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*. This title is probably an expansion of the original Hebrew designation, *The Wisdom of Jeshua Ben Sira*.

Its place  
in the  
canon

In the Latin and Greek Bibles *Ecclesiasticus* enjoyed equal authority with the other Old Testament books. It still holds this place in the Roman Catholic and Greek churches. In the Anglican church passages from *Ecclesiasticus* are still indicated for public reading. In the canon of the Old Testament, agreed upon by the Jews of Palestine about 90 A.D., *Ecclesiasticus* was not included. This exclusion was probably due to the fact that the name of the author and his relatively late date were known to those who formed the Old Testament canon. Unlike *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbs*, it was not by implication or tradition connected with the revered name of Solomon. Until the beginning of the last century, in common with the other books of the Old Testament apocrypha, it was published in the family editions of the English Bible. The exclusion of the apocryphal books from the Protestant canon was not due to the action of any authoritative committee or council, but to the arbitrary action of the Bible societies. To-day the wisdom of their action is being seriously challenged by thoughtful biblical scholars throughout the Anglo-Saxon world.

Date

*Ecclesiasticus*, or as it is known from its Hebrew title, Ben Sira, is one of the few Jewish books that can be dated definitely. In the prologue to the Greek version, its translator describes himself as the grandson of Jesus, the son of Sirach. He states that he went to Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of King Euergetes. From contemporary writers we know that this ruler became king in 170 B.C., which fixes the date of the translator in 132 B.C. His grandfather must, therefore, have lived some time during the early part of the second century B.C. In 50<sup>1</sup> Ben Sira describes in enthusiastic terms the activities of the high priest Simon the son of Onias. References in the writings of the church historian Eusebius leave little doubt that this Simon lived between 200 and 175 B.C. Allusions to the prevalent Greek culture and the absence of any references to the Maccabean uprising which began in

\* See Preface for the reasons for omitting Ben Sira.

## BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

169 B.C. confirm the evidence that Ben Sira lived and wrote between 200 and 175 )

The historical and religious background is very similar to that of Ecclesiastes. References in Ben Sira indicate that the author was familiar with the writings of Koheleth. Strong currents of Hellenic and Hebrew thought were mingling and reacting in Palestine, as well as in the larger Greek world. Attracted by the allurements of Greek culture, many Jews were proving faithless to the religion of their fathers. It was a period when it was especially difficult to be broad and yet loyal to the ideals of Judaism. Ben Sira was one of the few Jewish writers of the age who succeeded. He speaks appreciatively of banquets and has no words of denunciation for the Greek types of philosophy which were current in Jerusalem, as well as in Alexandria. If he had lived in Athens or at the centres of Greek culture throughout southwestern Asia, he would probably, like Paul, have been found at times among the eager youth that thronged the lecture rooms of the Greek philosophers.

The historical situation

In Ben Sira the vague, composite picture of the Jewish sage becomes clear and pulsating with life. He is the only Jewish sage of the olden days whose name we know. His name and many allusions in his writings indicate that he belonged to a well-known Jerusalem family. He was evidently a man of influence and probably of wealth. He appreciates the dignity of labor:

Ben Sira himself

Hate not laborious work

Neither agriculture that the Most High hath ordained.

At the same time he speaks rather patronizingly of manual laborers. They are important, but far below the scribes in influence and significance:

These are deft with their hands,

And each is wise in his handiwork.

But they are not inquired of in public council,

And in the assembly they enjoy no patronage (38<sup>31</sup>, 33).

Ben Sira lived at a period when the Jewish wise men were becoming scribes. They still retained the broad interests and points of view of the earlier sages. It was not until the beginning of the Christian era that the scribes focussed their attention largely upon the questions of the law. In 39<sup>1-11</sup> Ben Sira has given a vivid picture of the scribe of his day. Incidentally he has probably painted a clear picture of himself. The portrait is well worthy of careful consideration:

His training

He searches out the wisdom of all the ancients,

And is occupied in prophecies.

He preserves the discourses of men of renown,

And enters into the subtleties of parables.

He seeks out the hidden meaning of proverbs,

And is familiar with the dark things of parables.

He serves among great men,

And appears before a ruler.

He travels in the land of alien nations,



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

And has tried both good and evil things among men.  
He eagerly turns to the Lord who made him,  
And before the Most High he makes supplication,  
And opens his mouth in prayer,  
And makes supplication for his sin.  
If the Great Lord will,  
He will be filled with the spirit of understanding.  
He himself pours forth words of wisdom,  
And gives thanks to the Lord in prayer.  
He himself directs his counsel and knowledge,  
And in their secrets he meditates.  
He himself sets forth wise instruction,  
And glories in the law of the covenant of the Lord.  
Many praise his understanding,  
Never shall it be blotted out.  
His memorial shall not cease,  
And his name shall live from generation to generation.

His  
experi-  
ences

From chance references in his writings, it is possible to trace in outline Ben Sira's training and experiences. Possibly in the closing chapter allowance must be made for the fond idealization of old age, and yet the passage (51<sup>13-17</sup>) gives a vivid picture of this ancient teacher:

When I was yet young,  
Before I travelled abroad,  
I desired and sought out wisdom.  
In my youth I made supplication in prayer;  
And I will seek her out even to the end.  
My foot trod in her footsteps,  
From my youth I learned wisdom.  
I bowed down mine ear a little and received her,  
And much knowledge did I find.  
Her yoke was joyous to me,  
And to my teacher do I offer thanks.

To use Goethe's phrase, Ben Sira was trained in the stream of things. He listened intently to the teaching of the present, as well as of the past. He knew well the value of trained insight and experience. In 34<sup>10-13</sup> he states that

He who has had no experience knows little,  
But he who has travelled multiplies his skill.  
In my travels have I seen much,  
And many things have befallen me;  
Often I was in mortal danger,  
But was saved thanks to these things.



## BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

Here we have a character who reminds us in some ways of the energetic, cosmopolitan Paul, who especially attracted the young because of his various adventures and achievements, as well as through his glowing words and warm sympathy.

~~Ben Sira also drew much from the earlier teachers of his race.~~ In the prologue to his book, he is aptly described by his grandson as "a lover of learning." He freely acknowledges his debt to the earlier teachers of his race: Sources of his wisdom

I, indeed, came last of all,  
As one who gleans after the grape-gatherers.  
By the blessing of God I made progress,  
And, as a grape-gatherer, filled my winepress.  
Consider that I labored not for myself alone,  
But for all those who seek instruction (33<sup>16</sup>, 17).

~~Ben Sira was pre-eminently a teacher.~~ His voice was undoubtedly heard in the public assemblies. In 33<sup>18</sup> he declares: As a teacher

Hearken unto me, you great ones of the people,  
And you rulers of the congregation, give ear to me.

~~At times he taught privately as well as publicly:~~

Hearken, my son, and receive my judgments,  
And refuse not my counsel (6<sup>23</sup>).

~~Like the famous Greek poetess Sappho he appears to have been the head of a preparatory school.~~ In 51<sup>23</sup>, <sup>24</sup> he speaks of his house of instruction. Like a Greek philosopher, he extends an invitation to youth to become regular attendants on his lectures:

Turn in to me, you who are unlearned,  
And lodge in my house of instruction.  
No longer will you lack all these things,  
And your souls be so sore athirst.

His exhortations to his pupils reveal the man:

Hearken to my teachings, though you be but a few,  
And much silver and gold will you acquire thereby.  
Let me delight in my circle of hearers,  
And may you not be ashamed to sing my praise.  
Work your works before the end comes,  
And God will give you your reward in due time (51<sup>28-30</sup>).

~~These concluding words frankly and clearly reveal the ambitions and aspirations of this great Jewish teacher. He preferred the intimacy of a few intelligent and receptive disciples rather than the applause of the unintelligent mob. In the appreciation and achievements of his disciples he found his true reward.~~ In the light of modern oriental custom, it is easy to picture the scene: crosslegged on the floor or on a low divan sits the venerable sage. About him

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

in a semicircle on the floor are his disciples, intently listening as he pours out the result of his study, observation, and experience. The earnest spirit of the teacher permeates the ancient classroom. Ample opportunity was doubtless given for questions and answers, for Ben Sira's aim was not merely to instruct but to educate his disciples.

His  
range of  
interest

Ben Sira's range of interest was wide and even wider than those of the authors of the book of Proverbs. He touches upon most of the subjects with which they deal, and his conclusions are usually in full harmony with theirs. He aimed to give instruction upon all the varied problems of life. He was greatly interested in the homely, every-day relationships in the family, in business, and in the closer contacts between man and man. He even goes so far as to lay down the rules of courtesy and to instruct his disciples how they should behave at the table and treat their elders. In many respects he reminds us of the Chinese sage Confucius; but he was more deeply religious. In his teachings religion and ethics are closely blended. In 25<sup>12</sup> he declares

The beginning of the fear of the Lord is to love him,  
And the beginning of faith is to cleave to him.

Out of the depths of his own religious experience he exclaims:

Strive for the right, even to death,  
And the Lord will fight for you.

Ben  
Sira's  
sense of  
humor

Ben Sira was an exceedingly keen and sympathetic observer of human life. In the Syriac version of 19<sup>30</sup> he declares:

A man's attire proclaims his occupation,  
But his gait shows what he is.

Possibly he drew from his own experience when he declared in 26<sup>14</sup>:

A silent woman is a gift from the Lord!

Equally appealing to universal human experience is the proverb (found only in the Greek):

He who sins against his Maker,  
Let him fall into the hands of his physician!

Evidently Ben Sira had often mingled with the crowds in the market-places. The following proverb illustrates the result of his observation (27<sup>2</sup>):

As a nail sticks fast between the joinings of stones,  
So sin thrusts itself in between buying and selling.

The  
folly of  
the fool

Twenty centuries have not materially transformed human nature nor industry. Like all the sages, Ben Sira has much to say about fools, and he was eager to deliver them from their foolishness by making them laugh at their own folly:

Have you heard anything? Let it die with you;  
Be of good courage, it will not burst you!  
A fool travails because of a word,  
Even as a woman travails because of a child.

## BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

Possibly wise Ben Sira knew by experience the truth of the following epigram (20<sup>18</sup>):

A slip on the pavement is better than a slip of the tongue,  
Thus the fall of the wicked comes swiftly.

True, indeed, is his statement (21<sup>26</sup>):

The heart of fools is in their mouth,  
But the mouth of the wise is in their heart.

Keen is the irony in the following proverb and yet deserved (22<sup>11</sup>):

Mourn for the dead, for his light has failed,  
But mourn for a fool, for understanding has failed him.  
Weep gently for the dead, for he has found rest,  
But the life of a fool is worse than death.

Ben Sira's literary work has had a most dramatic history. In the prologue to the Greek translation, his grandson tells us that it was written first in Hebrew and that he later translated it into the Greek. Until the closing years of the last century, the original Hebrew version was practically unknown to western scholars. Then through the work of Professor Schechter and other Jewish scholars who ransacked the Genizah, or refuse heap, in connection with one of the Cairo synagogues, where soiled or torn manuscripts were stored away, Hebrew fragments of the book of Ben Sira were discovered.

The literary history of Ben Sira

Most of these come from about the eleventh Christian century and are of differing values. They richly supplement our present Greek texts and give us very definite knowledge of Ben Sira's ability as a Hebrew scholar. Few, if any, of the later Jews were masters of such a classical Hebrew style. These Hebrew fragments represent fully two-thirds of the original book and are of great value in reconstructing the original Hebrew text.

Style

The book of Ben Sira is almost the only Hebrew classic that has not been seriously revised by later hands. In this respect it is in striking contrast to Ecclesiastes. Not only the contents but the present order is apparently due from beginning to end to Ben Sira himself. The book falls naturally into five general divisions. Like the canonical book of Proverbs, the first four are introduced by hymns in praise of wisdom. The first collection (1<sup>1</sup>-16<sup>23</sup>) deals with religion and ethics. It is introduced by a discussion of the origin of wisdom in 1<sup>1-10</sup>. The second collection is found in 16<sup>24</sup>-23<sup>38</sup>. It is introduced by an essay on wisdom as revealed in the work of creation (16<sup>24-30</sup>). This essay is based on Proverbs 8. The second collection deals with the same general themes as the first collection. The third section is found in 24<sup>1</sup>-33<sup>15</sup>. It begins with a long poem in praise of wisdom (24). The rest of the section deals with a variety of practical problems paralleling in part the themes discussed in the first two collections. The third collection is found in 33<sup>16</sup>-43<sup>33</sup>. It contains a group of longer essays dealing with such subjects as the treatment of servants, dreams, and sacrifices.

Structure

The contents and general character of these first four sections suggest that they represent successive stages in the teaching activity of Ben Sira. They

Growth

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

correspond to the notes of the ordinary university professor. In some cases it is possible to detect the progress in Ben Sira's thought. The last group, with its longer essays, reveals perhaps the maturity of advancing years; while the opening sections with their terse, epigrammatic proverbs are suggestive of the intenseness and zeal of youth. The fifth section is found in 44<sup>1</sup>-50<sup>29</sup>. It consists of a description of the men in Israel's history who by their devoted services have promoted the cause of religion and morals.

Con-  
clusion The conclusion of the book is an appendix (51) beginning with a hymn of thanksgiving (51<sup>1-13</sup>) and concluding with a poem embodying many of Ben Sira's personal experiences.

The  
teach-  
ings re-  
garding  
God ~~Ben Sira anticipated in many ways the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth regarding the character of God. He also spoke out of the depths of his deep, personal experience.~~ In nature he found proofs at every turn of the existence, not of a cruel tyrant, but of a divine Friend without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the ground. In one deeply emotional passage he addresses God as *Lord, Father, and Master of my life*. In chapter 39<sup>19-22</sup> Ben Sira gives a vivid picture of his conception of God and his relation to man:

The works of all flesh are before him,  
And there is nothing hid from before his eyes.  
From everlasting to everlasting he beholdeth,  
Therefore there is no limit to his power to deliver,  
And there is nothing small nor petty with him,  
There is nothing too wonderful nor too hard for him.  
None may say: "Why is this?"  
For everything is selected for its purpose.  
His blessing overflows like the Nile,  
And he saturates the world like the river of Egypt.

In the thirty-third verse of the same chapter he exclaims:

The works of God are all good.  
They supply every need in its season.

In 44<sup>26</sup> he adds:

Bodily health and strength lift up the heart,  
But better than both is the fear of God.  
In the fear of the Lord there is no want,  
And with him there is no need to seek other help.

The phrase, *fear of Jehovah*, here as elsewhere in Jewish literature, represents that rare religion of heart and life which the sages sought to inspire in their disciples. As with Jesus of Nazareth, Ben Sira's ethics were grounded in his deep religious faith.

## BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

~~In 18<sup>10-14</sup> there is a remarkable poem describing God's relation to man. It is an echo of Psalm 90, but its spirit is far more constructive:~~ God's  
relation  
to man

As a drop of water from the sea or as a grain of sand,  
So are man's few years in the eternal day.  
Therefore the Lord is longsuffering toward them,  
And poureth out his mercy upon them.  
He seeth and knoweth that their end is evil,  
Therefore he doth increase his forgiveness.  
Man shows mercy toward his neighbor,  
But the Lord is merciful toward all mankind,  
Reproving, chastening, and teaching,  
And bringing back as a shepherd his flock.  
He hath mercy upon those who accept discipline,  
And diligently seek to know his judgments.

~~Like all the wisdom teachers of his race, Ben Sira stoutly insisted on man's freedom of will. In his thought God is ready to co-operate, but every man is responsible for his own acts. This teaching is clearly presented in 15<sup>15-17</sup>:~~ Man's  
freedom  
of will

If you desire you can keep the commandment,  
And it is wisdom to do his good pleasure.  
Poured out before you are fire and water,  
Stretch out your hand to whichever you desire.  
Life and death are before man,  
That which he desires shall be given him.

In verses 19, 20 he adds:

The eyes of God behold his works,  
And he knoweth man's every deed.  
He commandeth no man to sin,  
Nor giveth his strength to men of lies.

Not only did Ben Sira regard each man as responsible for all his acts, but he also believed that man alone could atone for his sins (3<sup>30</sup>):

Water quenches flaming fire,  
So almsgiving atones for sin.  
He who does a favor, it meets him on his way,  
And when he falls, he shall find support.

~~The absence of an inspiring hope of personal immortality makes Ben Sira's optimism all the more significant and heroic. The cold immortality of a man's fame, comforted, even though it did not satisfy him. In 41<sup>12, 13</sup> he exclaims:~~ His lack  
of the  
hope of  
a joy-  
ous, per-  
sonal  
immor-  
tality

Be in fear for your name, for that abides longer for you  
Than thousands of precious treasures.  
Life's goods last for limited days,  
But the reward of a name for days without number.



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Ben Sira apparently shared the rather indefinite and unsatisfying conception of life beyond the grave that is so brilliantly pictured in the third chapter of Job, for he declares (22<sup>11</sup>):

Weep gently for the dead,  
For he has found rest.

One of the most original and picturesque poems in the book deals with the subject of death (41<sup>1-4</sup>):

Ah! Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee  
To him who lives at peace in his family circle,  
To him who is at ease and altogether prosperous,  
And still has strength to enjoy luxury.

Hail! Death, how welcome is thy decree  
To a luckless man and to him who lacks strength,  
Who stumbles and trips at everything  
Who is broken and has lost hope!

Fear not death, it is your destiny,  
Remember that generations past and future share it with you.  
This is the portion of all flesh from God,  
How can you reject the decree of the Most High?  
Whether you live a thousand, or a hundred, or ten years,  
In Sheol there are no reproaches regarding life.

Man's  
attitude  
toward  
God

Ben Sira's religion was of the sincerest type, since he looked for no future rewards. In his present experience he found ample reasons for that deep loyalty toward God which breathes through all his teachings. The second chapter of his writings contains in many ways one of the noblest declarations of faith found in ancient Jewish literature. It is the same faith that permeates the oldest records of Jesus' teachings (21<sup>1-11</sup>):

My son, when you come to serve the Lord,  
Prepare your soul for temptation.  
Set your heart aright and be steadfast,  
And be not perturbed in the time of calamity,  
Cleave to him, and do not leave him,  
That you may prove yourself wise in the end.  
Accept whatever comes to you,  
And be patient in sickness and poverty;  
For gold is tested in the fire,  
And acceptable men in the furnace of affliction.  
Put your trust in the Lord, and he will help you,  
Hope in him, and he will make straight your way.



## BEN SIRAS' GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy,  
And turn not aside, lest you fall.  
You who fear the Lord, trust in him,  
And your reward shall not fail.  
You who fear the Lord, hope for good things,  
And for eternal gladness and deliverance.

Consider the generations of old and see:  
Whoever trusted the Lord and was put to shame?  
Or who was ever loyal to him and was forsaken?  
Or who ever called on him and was overlooked?  
For the Lord is compassionate and merciful,  
He forgiveth sins and saveth in time of trouble.

Ben Sira, in his teachings regarding the value of modesty, anticipated two of Jesus' familiar beatitudes (3<sup>17</sup>, 18, 20):

The  
importance of  
modesty  
and  
proper  
self-  
respect

My son, when prosperous, walk humbly,  
And you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.  
Be modest the more you are exalted,  
And you will find favor in the sight of God;  
For many are the mercies of God,  
And he reveals his secret to the humble.

~~Ben Sira, however, had no more sympathy than Jesus with that Uriah Heep type of humility which is as insincere as pride and boasting (4<sup>20-22</sup>):~~

Observe the opportunity and beware of evil,  
And be not ashamed of yourself;  
For there is a shame that brings iniquity,  
And another shame, glory and grace.  
Do not be obsequious to your own hurt,  
Do not humiliate yourself to your own injury.

~~Honesty, sincerity, and temperance are the personal virtues most stressed by Ben Sira.~~ In each case he aimed to deter youth from yielding to their baser, instinctive impulses by pointing out the consequences (6<sup>2-4</sup>):

Personal  
virtues

Do not become a slave to your passions,  
Lest you consume your strength.  
It will devour your leaf and destroy your fruit,  
And leave you like a dried-up tree;  
For unbridled passion destroys its possessor,  
And makes him the laughing-stock of his enemy.

Ben Sira strongly emphasizes the importance of always telling the truth (7<sup>13</sup>; 20<sup>24</sup>):

Never take pleasure in speaking a falsehood,  
For its consequence is not good.  
A foul blot in a man is a lie,  
It is continually in the mouth of the ignorant.

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Unconsciously, Ben Sira was endeavoring to carry the method of modern science into the field of morals and conduct and to point out the close relation between cause and effect. In 21<sup>8</sup> he declares:

He who builds his house with other men's money,  
Is as one who gathers stones for his sepulchral mound.

In the third verse of the same chapter he lays down the broad principle:

Like a two-edged sword is all iniquity,  
From its stroke there is no healing.

Man's  
social  
responsibilities

Like the Jewish sages who preceded and followed him, Ben Sira has much to say regarding man's duty to his fellow men. While he had great respect for formal religion, he realized that life and conduct were the touchstones of true faith. In 4<sup>1-10</sup> he has anticipated the definition of true religion found in the Epistle of James: *to visit the orphans and widows in their bereavement and to keep oneself clean from the evil of the world.* In this passage he has given vigorous expression to many of the noblest teachings of the earlier prophets:

My son, mock not the life of the poor,  
And grieve not the eyes of the bitter in spirit.  
Do not cause him who is in want to sigh,  
Nor vex the heart of the oppressed.  
Despise not the supplication of the poor,  
And do not turn away from the broken in spirit.  
Deliver the oppressed from his oppressors,  
And let not your spirit show contempt for a righteous cause.  
Be as a father to the fatherless or to orphans,  
And in the place of a husband to widows;  
Then God will call you his son,  
And be gracious to you and save you from destruction.

The  
value of  
Ben  
Sira's  
work

The writings of Ben Sira shed clear light upon the customs and inner life of the Jewish people at a period which is otherwise exceedingly obscure. It reveals the temptations to which the Jews were exposed through their close contact with the debased Hellenistic culture which Alexander introduced into southwestern Asia. It gives us the first clear, concrete picture of one of the wise men who have given us the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. It introduces us to the Jewish sages in the period when they were beginning to take up the work of the scribes. It sets forth clearly that nobler spirit in Judaism which enabled it to survive the disintegrating influences of the Greek and Roman periods. Above all it puts us into vital touch with the sane, constructive philosophy of life of one of the noblest teachers of the Jewish race. It enables us to look into the very soul of one who, like Jesus of Nazareth, was far greater than Solomon. A worthy forerunner of Jesus of Nazareth was Jesus, the son of Sirach.

## THE PROBLEM AND THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF JOB

THE book of Job is the Matterhorn of the Old Testament. Among many other lofty peaks it towers in solitary grandeur. Carlyle says of it: *It is all as great as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars!* There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal merit. I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book. It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem,—man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth.

The place of the book in the world's literature

Like all the Hebrew wisdom writings, the book of Job lacks close literary unity. In its present form it contains at least four loosely connected literary units. The first is the epic story, with its rhythmic prose style, passing over at several points into poetry, which is found in chapters 1, 2, and 42<sup>7-17</sup>. At the end of chapter 2 a few verses have evidently been lost, which told of how Job maintained his integrity, even though, like his wife, his three friends counselled him to curse God and die. Otherwise this story is complete in itself. The real book of Job, however, that has challenged the universal admiration of all generations, is found in chapters 3-27, 29-31, and 38<sup>1</sup>-42<sup>6</sup>. The close literary unity of the successive cycles of speeches is broken by the insertion of chapter 28, which contains a majestic poem describing the futility of seeking to attain divine wisdom. While this matchless poem is well worthy a place among the great masterpieces of the book of Job, it interrupts the logical thought of the lyric drama, and is clearly the work of a later poet.

Its structure

The unity of the drama of Job is further broken by the Elihu speeches found in chapters 32-37. They are inserted immediately after chapter 31, in which Job has appealed directly from men to Jehovah. The immediate response to Job's appeal is found in chapters 38-41. These record Jehovah's appearance in the thunder-cloud and the message which was the divine answer to Job's challenge. Late Aramaic words and different idioms distinguish these chapters from those which precede and follow. These speeches of Elihu are in reality but verbose and rather artificial expansions of the arguments of Eliphaz presented earlier in the poem. Also in the prose epilogue (42<sup>7-17</sup>) Job's other friends are all mentioned by name. The absence of any reference to Elihu makes the evidence practically complete that chapters 32-37 were added by some later poet who was not satisfied with the treatment of the problem of innocent suffering in the preceding chapters and who aimed to present his own convictions in this bold and dramatic way.

The Elihu speeches

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The  
origin  
of the  
story of  
Job

The prophet Ezekiel in describing the guilt of Jerusalem declared, in the days preceding its fall in 586 B.C., that *if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would by their righteousness save only themselves* (Ezek. 14<sup>14</sup>, 20). From this incidental reference it is clear that long before the Babylonian exile Job figured as one of the saints in early Hebrew story. He is here associated with Noah, who represented a period long antedating the beginnings of Hebrew history. The story was evidently so firmly fixed in the popular mind that a detailed description of Job's piety was unnecessary. The character of Job, as portrayed in the epic story of Job 1, 2, and 42<sup>7-17</sup>, fully justifies Ezekiel's allusion.

The  
Babylonian  
Job

The present setting of the prose story of Job is the wilderness east of Palestine. Its contents implies that it came to the Hebrews through their Aramean ancestors. It is not impossible, however, that it goes back to an older Babylonian or primitive Semitic original. A strikingly close parallel has come down from the ancient cuneiform library of Asshurbanipal. It is preserved in a series of tablets entitled, *I Will Praise the Word of Wisdom.* This title indicates that, like the book of Job, it was classified under the head of wisdom literature. The presence of the name Bēl instead of Marduk (who became the chief god of the empire after the rise of Babylon about 2000 B.C.) indicates that, like most of the documents in the library of Asshurbanipal, it was a copy of a far older original. Its hero is Tābt-utul-Bēl, king of Nippur. The first tablet begins with praise of Bēl for deliverance from great affliction. It then describes in graphic terms the unprecedented affliction that overtook the king. Tābt-utul-Bēl speaks:

A king—I have been changed into a slave.  
A madman—my companions became estranged from me.  
In the midst of the assembly they spurned me.  
At the mention of my piety—terror.  
By day—deep sighs; at night—weeping.  
The month—cries; the year—distress.

The second tablet continues the theme:

I cried to the god, but he did not show me his countenance;  
I prayed to the goddess, but she did not raise my head.

The priests also could not help him:

The like of this had never been seen;  
Whatsoever I touched, trouble was in pursuit.

Then, as in Job, follows a long protestation of innocence:

As though I had not always set aside the portion for the god,  
And had not invoked the goddess at the meal,  
Had not bowed my face and brought my tribute;  
As though I were one in whose mouth supplication and prayer were  
not constant,

. . . . .

## THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

As though I were like the one who has pronounced the sacred name  
of his god!

Prayer was my practice, sacrificing my law.

Royal prayer—that was my joy.

His essential innocence is established. The cause of his misfortune is therefore inscrutable. There follows a majestic passage which recalls the ninetyeth Psalm as well as passages from the book of Job:

What, however, seems good to oneself, to a god is displeasing;  
What is spurned by oneself finds favor with a god.  
Who is there that can grasp the will of the gods in heaven?  
The plan of a god is full of mystery; who can understand it?  
How can mortals learn the way of a god?  
He who is still alive at evening is dead the next morning,  
In an instant he is cast into grief, of a sudden he is crushed;  
For a moment he sings and plays,  
In a twinkling he wails like a mourner.

Have they enough, they consider themselves like their God;  
If things go well, they prate of mounting to heaven;  
If they are in distress, they speak of descending into the realm of the  
dead.

Then the hero describes at length his malady:

The sickness threw me on the ground and stretched me on my back;  
It bent my high stature like a poplar.

The house became a prison;  
As fetters for my body, my hands were powerless;  
As pinions for my person, my feet were stretched out.  
My discomfort was painful, the downfall severe.  
A strap of many twists held me fast,  
A sharply-pointed spear pierced me.  
All day the pursuer followed me;  
At night he granted me no respite whatever.

Unfortunately, at this point the text is missing, but the context implies that the king's humility and petitions touched the heart of Bēl, for we have a minute description of how the sufferer was restored to health:

My sins he caused the wind to carry away,  
Mine ears, which had been closed and bolted as a deaf person's,  
He took away their deafness, he restored my hearing.



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

He made my form like one perfect in strength,  
My entire body he restored.  
He wiped out anger, he freed from his wrath,  
The depressed form he revived.

The ancient poem closes with a hymn of thanksgiving.

The resemblances between this Babylonian story and that contained in the book of Job are many and obvious. Both may go back to an older Semitic original. The problem of why the innocent suffer is evidently as old as human history. The oldest Hebrew version of this story is obviously that found in chapters 1 and 2 and 42<sup>7-17</sup> in the book of Job. It has the characteristic repetitions and the concrete language of a popular tale. It is hyperbolic in all its details. For example, Job has seven sons and three daughters, which from the point of view of an oriental is regarded as the ideal number. He also has seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses. After his vindication he is given the same number of sons and daughters and twice as many possessions as he had at first. The series of calamities, which in rapid succession overtake him, are likewise characteristic not of real life but of the melodrama in which the action is dependent not upon the actors but upon external events. The story, with its bold portrayal of the assembly of the heavenly hierarchy and of the divine authority given Satan to test Job, was evidently not told to record exact history but to illustrate a great teaching. It clearly reflects current folk religion. In its literary classification it belongs, therefore, with such stories as the fall of man in the third chapter of Genesis, or with the didactic stories in the first six chapters of the book of Daniel.

Job, the hero of the popular story, is famous not only for his abounding prosperity but also for his superlative piety. This piety is of a conventional type, and is expressed in formal sacrifices rather than in aggressive acts of social service. In this respect he is fundamentally different from the Job of the lyric poem, whose oath of clearance (Job 31) contains the noblest prophetic and social definition of religion to be found in the Old Testament. Also Job of the prose story is a rich, prosperous sheik living in the borderland between the Jordan and the Arabian desert. In every respect he lives the life of a nomad. In contrast, the Job of the lyric drama is intimately conversant with the social problems and life of a great city. Satan figures only in the prose story. He is a regularly accredited member of the divine hierarchy. He is the chief prosecuting attorney of earth. His task is to discover and to report to Jehovah the sins of all mankind. Experience has made him a pessimist regarding human virtue. Piety, he contends, is always prompted by self-interest. Satan, as here portrayed, is mercilessly faithful to his task. In fact, his only fault is that he is overzealous. He is still intrusted by Jehovah with great power. Obviously, the Satan here pictured is very different from the devil that figures in the New Testament. He is identical with Satan or the Adversary in Zechariah 3, whose zeal in pointing out the sins of the Jewish people is condemned by Jehovah.

It is significant that the earliest references elsewhere in the Old Testament



## THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

to Satan are found in Zechariah 3 and I Chronicles 21<sup>1</sup> both of them post-exilic writings. There is a distant likeness between the character of Satan in the prologue of Job and the Persian Ahriman, who was believed to be the head of the hierarchy of evil. The resemblance, however, is not close, and the points of difference are equally striking. Satan is more like the lying spirit who, in the story told by the prophet Micaiah and recorded in I Kings 22, was sent by Jehovah to deceive the false prophets and who by his deceptive message lured Ahab on to his ruin.

Satan in Jewish literature

In this prose story there is no suggestion of acquaintance with the law of Deuteronomy which made legal only one central sanctuary (cf. 1<sup>5</sup> and 42<sup>8</sup>). The Chaldeans are spoken of as mere Arab marauders, and not as the conquerors who in 586 B.C. captured Jerusalem and left it a barren waste. The indications, therefore, all suggest that this popular tale was current among the Hebrews long before the days of Ezekiel. It was probably committed to writing during the early part of the Babylonian exile. Then its promises of material restoration, if the nation would but faithfully endure the tests to which it was being subjected at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, would have brought comfort to the minds of the troubled Jews. The allusions in Ezekiel 14<sup>14, 20</sup>, which come from the earlier part of the Babylonian exile, to a well-known hero, Job, whose character closely corresponds to that of the Job of the prose story, indicate that this popular tale was familiar to the Jewish exiles.

Date of the prose story

The question raised by Satan, *Does Job serve God for naught?* is the key-note in this ancient tale. Is the piety of man prompted by selfish motives, or by disinterested devotion? Will it endure the test of misfortune? These questions, perennially vital, are here dramatically presented. The story also suggests one of the many solutions of the eternal problem of the suffering of the righteous which are massed in the book of Job. It assumes that virtue can only be attested by trial. Suffering, therefore, is necessary, if the quality of man's piety is to be proved. The application of this explanation to the problem of the faithful Jews during the Babylonian exile is obvious; they were simply being tested. The conclusion seemed equally clear: if they endured the test, their former prosperity would be restored. The only flaw in the theory was that as a matter of fact their misfortunes but increased, and no vindication came to them. A more fundamental explanation of the problem of innocent suffering was required.

The aims and teachings of this story

The real drama of Job begins with the third chapter. Here a great wisdom poet begins to grapple with the stupendous problem. The action depends not upon external circumstance, but upon the development within the mind of Job and his friends. The author of this poem uses the framework of the popular story, but creates a new Job and a new plot. The unique explanation of Job's suffering given in chapters 1 and 2 is completely ignored. Likewise the problem, *Does Job serve for naught?* The friends, instead of being condemned by Jehovah, as they are in 42<sup>7</sup>, figure as the protagonists of the current orthodoxy. In a series of formal dialogues the problem is defined in detail, and the various current solutions presented. In these dialogues, sometimes the didactic and sometimes the lyric note is dominant. In his long

The lyric drama of Job

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

speeches, Job, instead of being a paragon of forbearance, as in the prose story, pours out the bitterness of his soul and charges God with injustice in no measured terms. Then, with marvellous psychological skill, the author gradually introduces those elements of hope and higher idealism in the mind of Job which lead up to the final *dénouement*. The action and progress are wholly subjective. The term lyric drama, therefore, is the most exact western definition which can be found for this supreme product of Semitic art.

The author of the lyric drama

The author of this lyric drama is evidently a man of broad culture and experience. He is democratic in his outlook on life. He is inspired with the noblest humanitarian motives. He is familiar with both the social problems of a great city and the life of the wilderness which extends to the east and south of Palestine. Evidently he himself had travelled with one of the many caravans which penetrated its wastes. Many of his figures reveal such an intimate familiarity with the peculiar life of the Nile valley that there is little doubt that he himself had visited this land of mystery. He was a keen observer and lover of nature. He was acquainted with the changing phases of the seasons, appreciative of the stately movement of the stars, and familiar with the habits of animals and birds. Above all, he was a philosopher who had pondered deeply on the profoundest problems of human life. He had experienced the doubts of youth, and those darker questionings which threatened the very faith of his race and age. Amidst intense stress and struggle he had battled his way through the mazes of the current orthodoxy to a higher conception of God, and more than that, to a personal acquaintance with him.

His aims

The aims of the author are clearly revealed. His first endeavor was to prove the insufficiency and the cruel injustice of the old dogma that prosperity was always the reward of right doing, and conversely, that calamity was a certain evidence that its victim had sinned. He also aimed to portray the struggles and the inevitable psychological reactions of a noble soul confronted by the darker realities of human life and of the universe. He set out to show the utter inadequacy of the current belief which conceived of the life beyond the grave as one of passive, passionless existence in a gloomy region to which not a single ray of divine goodness and love penetrated. He aimed instead to make clear that, if not in this world, at least in the life beyond the grave the injustice of this present existence would be righted and the innocent sufferer vindicated. He sought in this mighty drama to set forth his own deep convictions that the God whose providences seemed from certain angles to be unjust was after all man's final refuge, and that instinctively and rightly man turns to him as the fountain of all justice. Above all he endeavored to teach in concrete terms the supreme truth that man's personal experience of God and the humility and trust which that experience begets are the only satisfactory solvents of the otherwise insoluble problem of why the righteous suffer.

Problems in the lyric drama

This lyric drama deals with Israel's mature problems. The childhood faith of the race lies far behind it. Its background is the complex life of a highly developed civilization. This background is not concealed by the archaic coloring and the nomadic setting. In this drama Hebrew wisdom

## THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

thought approaches nearest to Greek drama and philosophy. Job's dialogues with his friends recall the memorable discussions that during the same age were being carried on in the schools of ancient Hellas. Job has much in common with Prometheus, the hero of Aeschylus's great drama. The fact that the author of Job in his opening chapter (3) evidently had in mind the classic passage in Jeremiah 20<sup>14</sup>, <sup>15</sup>, in which the martyr prophet curses the day in which he was born, indicates that the poem is at least exilic or post-exilic. Even more significant is the author's bold parody (Job 7<sup>17</sup>) of Psalm 8<sup>4</sup>, which was probably not written earlier than the first half of the Persian period. The drama of Job reflects the strongly sceptical note which first found expression in Malachi 2<sup>17</sup>:

You have wearied Jehovah with your words.  
Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?"  
In that you say, "Everyone that does evil  
Is good in the sight of Jehovah,  
And he delights in them;  
Or where is the God of justice?"

Or in Malachi 3<sup>14</sup>, <sup>15</sup>:

You have said, "It is useless to serve God,  
And what gain is it to us to have kept his charge,  
And that we have walked in funeral garb before him?  
Even now we call the proud happy,  
Yea, those who work iniquity thrive,  
Yea, they tempt God and escape."

The prophet, who probably lived shortly before the appearance of Nehemiah in 444 B.C., assures us that those who feared Jehovah spoke these words one to another. The reference in Job 16<sup>17</sup> possibly implies that the author of the drama was acquainted with Isaiah 53<sup>9</sup>. In any case, the cumulative evidence points to a date not earlier than the middle of the Persian period, and possibly as late as the earlier part of the Greek period. The writings of II Isaiah, however, and the great psalms of suffering found in the Psalter indicate that the problem of the suffering of the innocent in Jewish history became most acute in the discouraging, dreary years immediately preceding the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. A date about 450 B.C. well satisfies the implications of this great lyric drama.

Date

The drama opens with an impassioned speech on the lips of Job in which he curses the day of his birth (3). The author's aim is to reveal the intensity of Job's anguish, and at the same time to make clear the limitations placed upon him by the acceptance of the current belief regarding the life after death. The literary structure of the drama is apparently determined by the methods employed by the ancient Jewish teachers. It recalls the later discussions between the schools of Shammai and Hillel recorded in the Talmud. The current interpretations of the problem of suffering and the divine rulership of the world are presented by Job's three friends, the famous sages of his day. Job, stung by their at first implied and later openly ex-

The literary structure of the drama



## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

pressed doubts regarding his integrity, assails the very dogmas which he had hitherto held, and battles his way through to a larger concept of the universe and of God. In three cycles of speeches these rival positions are presented with a fulness and vigor that reveal the marvelous breadth and the scientific spirit of the author (4-27). In the end the friends are silenced, and Job after a masterly *résumé* rests his case with God (29-31). Then out of the thunder-storm Jehovah answers Job, not replying to his wild arraignment of divine justice, but revealing to him in a series of powerful pictures and impressive questions the omniscience and wisdom and love that rule the universe (38-40<sup>2</sup>, 6-14). The elaborate descriptions of behemoth (probably the hippopotamus) and leviathan (probably the crocodile) in 40<sup>15</sup>-41<sup>34</sup> are clearly later additions to the original drama. In conclusion Job declares in a speech, the brevity of which is in striking contrast to his earlier impassioned invective, that he has spoken of that which he knew not (40<sup>3-5</sup>, 42<sup>2</sup>, 3, 4, 5). Humbly but joyfully he asserts:

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,  
But now mine eye sees thee.

Each of Job's friends possessed certain well-defined characteristics. Each emphasized distinct elements in the character of Jehovah. Eliphaz, the oldest, naturally speaks first. His is the mellow ripeness of old age. He is courtly, tactful, and considerate. Of the three friends, he is distinctly the prophet and philosopher. In many ways he represents Job's old self. His thought is also tinged by a certain mystical element which adds to his attractiveness. He presents the highest conception of God then known. He conceives of him as a benign ruler personally interested in the development of his human children. But Eliphaz is more of a philosopher and theologian than a lover of his fellows. He holds tenaciously to the current dogma that calamity is always the result of man's sin. Unfortunately for Job, Eliphaz is far more intent upon defending his favorite theological doctrines than he is upon relieving his friend's heartbreak.

Bildad, on the other hand, is a typical traditionalist. He can think only in terms of the past. His outlook is entirely backward rather than forward. The only testimony which he regards as valid is that of the ancients. He feels that his especial task is to defend the rightness of Jehovah's rule of the universe. When Job dares question the justice of that rule, Bildad, in his zeal to defend the orthodox God, ignores completely his duty of sympathizing with his tortured friend.

Zophar is the dogmatist. By bluster and loud speaking he sought to convict Job of sin and to establish his thesis that divine wisdom is inscrutable, and therefore that the one task of man is to submit.

The rôle of Job's friends is twofold: first, dramatically, to complete the cycle of Job's woes, for they deprive him of their friendship and strip him of his reputation; secondly, to present strongly and in detail the current interpretations of the suffering of the innocent that their inadequacy and failure to solve the problem, so dramatically presented by Job's fate, might be made clearly apparent. Well do the friends play their double rôle.

The  
charac-  
ter of  
Job's  
friends

Bildad

Zophar

Their  
rôle

## THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

At first Job expectantly looks to his friends for comfort and support. When he finds that they are more loyal to their theories than they are to him, and that they do not hesitate to apply even to his own case the grim old doctrine of proportionate rewards, the discovery perturbs him more than any of the calamities which have hitherto overtaken him. He can scarcely believe the testimony of his ears as he hears them tear to shreds his reputation, which he regarded as more firmly established than the everlasting hills. He hastens in his reply to Eliphaz to explain the reasons why in his desperation he had spoken rashly. Then, when he sees the stony, suspicious faces of his friends, he is overwhelmed by their injustice and by the feeling of utter loneliness. Like desert brooks, they had failed him in his hour of sorest need. For the moment he is carried off his feet and is overwhelmed with the thought that possibly he has sinned. If so, why does God, instead of showing mercy, pursue him like a relentless tyrant?

The progress of thought in the first cycle of speeches

Bildad's speech only drives the arrows of the Almighty deeper into Job's quivering heart. In his desperation he turns upon God and boldly questions the justice of the seemingly irresponsible tyrant who has brought all these calamities upon him, and yet gives him no opportunity to defend himself either before a human or a divine tribunal. Henceforth the ultimate problem in the mind of Job is whether justice or injustice rules the universe. God, not Job, is on trial. Subjected to this searching test, the God of his earlier years, the God of his friends, the Superman who he believed meted out proportionate rewards, suddenly becomes a mere oriental tyrant, as capricious and unjust as the irresponsible potentates who lorded it over the vast Persian empire.

The seeming injustice of God

These intemperate words stirred Zophar's rage, so that he openly charges Job with guilt. Stung to the quick, Job turns upon his friends with bitter invective. He even accuses them of misrepresentation in their presumptuous attempt to defend the God of their narrow faith. Involuntarily he turns from the orthodox God of his friends, and appeals to him before whom no godless man would come. Across his tortured mind there flashes for the moment the hope that possibly that God of justice will yet bring him back from Sheol and restore to him those joys of life of which he has been so ruthlessly robbed. The dark clouds quickly close in upon him, but having had this radiant vision, Job cannot forget it. The progress, therefore, in this first cycle of speeches is not straight ahead, but more like the zigzag path of the lightning stroke. He has seen clearly the insufficiency of the current conventional theology. Already not his reason but his faith begins to reach out involuntarily toward a God who is just and the friend of the afflicted. With this larger faith comes the fluctuating but ever-growing hope that even beyond the grave both he and God will yet be vindicated.

The appeal to God

Henceforth Job and his friends move in opposite directions. As their conviction that he is guilty grows, his consciousness of his essential innocence deepens. In time he ignores them altogether, and turns in eager expectancy to the God of justice in whom he firmly believes. At the same time with his lips he unsparingly and often bitterly arraigns the justice of the God of appearances. In 19<sup>23-27</sup> the earlier fleeting hope that after death his innocence

The progress in the second and third cycle of speeches

## HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

would yet be vindicated suddenly becomes a definite conviction. In words that have become immortal he declares:

I know that my Deliverer liveth,  
And at last he will stand up on the earth;  
And after this my skin is destroyed  
Then I shall behold God.

Thus with marvellous skill the author of the drama of Job has revealed the birth-pangs of the belief in a personal immortality. In the remainder of the drama, however, he threshes out the problem entirely in the arena of man's earthly existence. His great message was evidently for those in the thick of the struggle then raging. He was seeking to give them a faith by which to live as well as die. The charges of Job's friends grow shorter, until finally they are silenced. In each successive speech Job appeals with greater assurance from the God who seems to disregard man's fate to the God of justice and love whom he feels must exist somewhere in the universe. Job, having established his own positive goodness, as well as his innocence, in keeping with the loftiest social and moral standards of the prophets and sages (29-31), leaves his case with his divine Judge and Vindicator.

Mean-  
ing of  
the  
speech  
of  
Jehovah

Job, in his quest for a larger, truer conception of God and his rule, was handicapped by the primitive belief that God was the immediate cause or agent in every event or experience that came to man. His generation had not yet discovered the eternal laws that rule the universe. And yet in the majestic speech of Jehovah, the poet, with marvellous intuition and skill, opens Job's mind to an appreciation of these laws. Typical illustrations of the workings of what we to-day call the laws of nature are marshalled before Job in quick succession. Thus a broader basis is provided for that faith in divine justice and goodness which Job could not banish from his inner consciousness, even in his hour of deepest woe. More comforting still, the infinite, omniscient God had condescended to speak directly to the heart of his afflicted servant. No longer does he know him simply by others' testimony:

But now mine own eye sees thee.

A mysterious personal experience of God suddenly swept away all Job's anguish and doubts; at last he was at peace, for he had found his divine Friend. In the teaching of the Jewish sages personal religious experience was not only the beginning of wisdom but also its climax.



# THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. GOD
- III. MAN

- A. THE NATURE OF MAN
- B. THE EDUCATION OF MAN
- C. MAN IN HIS DOMESTIC RELATIONS
- D. MAN IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS
- E. MAN IN HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS
- F. MAN IN HIS LEGAL RELATIONS
- G. MAN IN HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS
- H. MAN'S DUTY TO ANIMALS
- I. MAN'S DUTY TO HIMSELF
- J. MAN'S DUTY TO OTHERS
- K. MAN'S DUTY TO GOD
- L. THE REWARDS OF HUMAN CONDUCT

## IV. NUMERICAL ENIGMAS



# THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

## I

### INTRODUCTION: THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE

§ 1. Preface: The Aim of the Book of Proverbs, Pr. 1<sup>2-6</sup>, 22<sup>17-21</sup>

- Pr. 1      <sup>2</sup>That men may get wisdom<sup>a</sup> and discipline,<sup>b</sup>  
            May understand words of discernment,  
            <sup>3</sup>May receive training in wise conduct  
            In that which is right, just, and honorable;  
            <sup>4</sup>That shrewdness<sup>c</sup> may be taught to the simple,  
            And knowledge and a purpose to youth,  
            <sup>5</sup>That the wise man<sup>d</sup> may hear and grow wiser,  
            And that the intelligent man may be guided<sup>e</sup>  
            <sup>6</sup>In interpreting proverbs and parables,  
            The words of the wise and their riddles.<sup>f</sup>

- 22    <sup>17</sup>Incline your ear and hear my words,<sup>g</sup>  
            And apply your mind to know them.<sup>h</sup>

**Introduction.**—The desire to arrest men's attention and to make clear to them the fundamental, practical value of the wisdom teaching embodied in the proverbs that follow was what actuated the author of these introductory chaps. (1-9). He opens with a brief statement of the aims of the wisdom teachers; he next cites definite illustrations of the moral perils from which their teachings will deliver those who heed; then he points out the evils that result from not heeding and the rewards that wisdom has to confer. In conclusion he describes the origin and character of Wisdom and contrasts what Wisdom and Folly each give to those who follow them. Into this long introd. have been inserted 6<sup>1-10</sup> and 9<sup>7-12</sup>, which are clearly foreign to their context and belong with the collection of proverbs that follows. Otherwise the entire section is closely bound together by the same literary style and earnest, hortatory spirit. It reveals the zeal of the wisdom teacher to save the ignorant, inexperienced, and tempted from fatal mistakes and to develop strong characters. The zeal and teachings of the earlier prophets live again in the soul of this earnest lover of men. It is a fitting and effective introduction to the practical maxims that follow.

§ 1 The book of Pr. is introduced by the superscription *The Proverbs of Solomon, Son of David, King of Israel*. Inasmuch as the preface that follows seems to require some such title, it is probable that it was added by the author of the Introd., although it may come from the final editor of the book. As has already been noted, Introd., p. 15, it ignores the other superscription found within the book, and, like the titles to Ecc. and Sg. of Sgs., simply represents a late tradition. The opening vs. that follow are the closest parallel to a modern preface to be found in the O.T. writings. (A N.T. parallel is the preface to the Gospel of Luke.) Ten parallel lines define succinctly the aims that the Heb. sages sought to realize and the practical results they hoped to impart to those who diligently studied and listened to their teachings. Their purpose was evidently to educate as well as to instruct, to rear up intelligent disciples as well as to impart useful information.

<sup>a</sup> Pr. 1<sup>2</sup> Cf. for the meaning of the Heb. word translated *wisdom*, Introd., p. 10.

<sup>b</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> This word, meaning originally *discipline*, also indicates the instruction or character that comes through discipline and training.

<sup>c</sup> 1<sup>4</sup> This word ordinarily means *subtlety*, skill in attaining given ends.

<sup>d</sup> 1<sup>5</sup> Or, *Let the wise man*.

<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>6</sup> Lit., *get guidance*.

<sup>f</sup> 1<sup>6</sup> This closing vs. turns the attention from the training of disciples to the subject-matter employed in education, and thus connects the preface with the collection of proverbs that follows.

<sup>g</sup> 22<sup>17</sup> Omitting *the wise*, which is doubtless a gloss, and repeating the preceding word in the Heb. So Toy, now confirmed by the parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. Introd., p. 15).

<sup>h</sup> 22<sup>17</sup> Altering one letter of Heb. to agree with the parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet*.

## INTRODUCTION

- <sup>18</sup>For it is pleasant<sup>i</sup> that you keep them in mind,<sup>j</sup>  
 That they be ready<sup>k</sup> on your lips.  
<sup>19</sup>That your trust may be in the Lord,  
 I have taught you how to live.<sup>l</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Have I not written you thirty proverbs<sup>m</sup>  
 With sound advice<sup>n</sup> and knowledge,  
<sup>21</sup>To teach you words of truth,  
 That you may answer him who questions you?<sup>o</sup>

### § 2. Wisdom's Appeal, Pr. 8<sup>1-11</sup>

#### Pr. 8

- Is not Wisdom calling,  
 And Reason crying aloud?<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>On the prominent heights by the way,<sup>q</sup>  
 In the midst of<sup>r</sup> the highways she stands,  
<sup>3</sup>By the gates that lead into the city,  
 At the entrance she cries aloud:  
<sup>4</sup>To you, O men, I call,  
 My appeal is to all mankind.  
<sup>5</sup>O simple ones, learn to be prudent,  
 And you who are foolish, gain insight.<sup>s</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>Give heed; what I speak is important,<sup>t</sup>  
 And what my lips utter<sup>u</sup> is right.  
<sup>7</sup>Because my mouth speaks truth,  
 And false lips are abominable<sup>v</sup> to me.  
<sup>8</sup>All the words of my mouth are just;<sup>w</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 22<sup>18</sup> Gk. takes this with <sup>17</sup>, to know that they are pleasant. Syr., Targ., Because they are pleasant, keep them, etc.

<sup>j</sup> 22<sup>18</sup> Lit., in your belly.

<sup>k</sup> 22<sup>18</sup> Lit., established together.

<sup>l</sup> 22<sup>19</sup> Lit., your way. So Gk. Heb. is corrupt. This vs., as we might expect from the mention of the Lord (lit., Yahweh), has no parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet*.

<sup>m</sup> 22<sup>20</sup> Gk., Syr., Targ., Lat., triply. The corrupt Heb. here has puzzled all commentators. It may be pointed to read *thirty*, and this was probably the original reading, for the collection which these vs. introduce (22<sup>22-24</sup>) falls naturally into thirty divisions, and the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* contains thirty chapters, the last beginning, *Consider these thirty chapters, to enjoy them and to profit by them*. The word *proverbs* in the trans. is supplied to complete the sense.

<sup>n</sup> 22<sup>20</sup> Lit., counsels.

<sup>o</sup> 22<sup>21</sup> Following Toy in omitting from each line a superfluous repetition of *truth*. The reading questions is that of the Gk. Heb., sends.

§ 2 The tendency to hypostasize wisdom was natural, although the author was probably influenced by the Gk. atmosphere and type of thought that in his day had penetrated Palestine and was in the ascendancy in all the lands of the dispersion, cf. *Introd.*, p. 15. Wisdom represents the collective teachings and work of the Heb. sages. She is thought of as a woman because the Heb. word is feminine. The figure of speech emphasizes the unity of the wisdom school and its teachings. The introduction of Understanding as a synonym of Wisdom indicates that what we have here is simply a personification, not the postulating of a being distinct from God, as in the case of the Gk. demiurge.

<sup>p</sup> 8<sup>1</sup> Lit., give her voice.

<sup>q</sup> 8<sup>2</sup> Probably the walls and towers and all elevated points from which she can call to the passer-by. Cf. the parallel passage, 1<sup>20-21</sup>. The Gk. omits *by the way*.

<sup>r</sup> 8<sup>2</sup> So Gk. Heb., between.

<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>3</sup> So Gk. Heb. repeats the same verb as in the first member of the couplet and yields no clear sense. Its reading is clearly due to a scribal error. RV., *Be of an understanding heart*.

<sup>t</sup> 8<sup>3</sup> Or, revising the Heb. with the aid of <sup>9</sup>, true.

<sup>u</sup> 8<sup>3</sup> Lit., the opening of my lips.

<sup>v</sup> 8<sup>7</sup> Lit. (Gk. and Syr.), an abomination. Heb., the abomination of my lips is wickedness.

<sup>w</sup> 8<sup>8</sup> Lit., in righteousness.

Places  
where  
the wise  
teach

Classes  
to which  
they  
appeal

Nature  
and  
value of  
their  
teachings

## WISDOM'S APPEAL

Naught in them is twisted or crooked.

<sup>9</sup>All is clear to the man of sense,  
And right to those who gain knowledge.

<sup>10</sup>Choose instruction<sup>x</sup> rather than silver,  
And knowledge rather than gold.

<sup>11</sup>For wisdom is better than corals,  
And with her no treasures compare.

### § 3. Characteristics of Wisdom, Pr. 9<sup>10</sup>, 16<sup>4</sup>, 8<sup>12-21</sup>

**Pr. 9** <sup>10</sup>The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord,  
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.  
**16** <sup>6</sup>By kindness and truth iniquity is expiated,  
And by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.

Rooted  
in  
religion

**8** <sup>12</sup>I, Wisdom, make prudence my dwelling,  
And I possess<sup>y</sup> knowledge and<sup>z</sup> insight.  
<sup>13</sup>Arrogance,<sup>a</sup> pride, and wrong doing,<sup>b</sup>  
And false speech<sup>c</sup> do I hate.

Prudent  
and  
discern-  
ing

Antag-  
onistic  
to evil

<sup>14</sup>With me are counsel and skill;<sup>d</sup>  
Insight and power are mine.

Indis-  
pensable  
to rulers

<sup>15</sup>By me kings do reign,  
And rulers decree what is just.

<sup>16</sup>By me officials govern,  
And nobles rule<sup>e</sup> over the earth.

<sup>17</sup>Those who love me, I love,<sup>f</sup>  
Those who seek earnestly find me.

Easily  
found

<sup>18</sup>With me are riches and honor,  
Lordly wealth and prosperity.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>19</sup>My fruit is better than gold,<sup>h</sup>  
My revenue than choicest silver.

Reward-  
ing those  
who  
seek me

<sup>20</sup>I walk in the way that is right,  
And keep to the paths of justice,

<sup>x</sup> 3<sup>10</sup> Gk., Syr., and Targ. omit *my* (Heb.); this probably represents the original reading, for it is supported by the next line.

§ 3 Wisdom is here defined broadly. It is the guide of rulers and judges as well as of those who in private life seek success and prosperity.

<sup>y</sup> 3<sup>12</sup> Or *have found out*.

<sup>z</sup> 3<sup>12</sup> Adding the *and* required by the context and supplied in the Gk.

<sup>a</sup> 3<sup>13</sup> Heb. inserts at the beginning of this vs. the detached line: *The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil*. It is probably from a scribe who added it as an introduction to the couplet that follows. It is loosely connected with the context and destroys the regular parallelism. Its definition of the fear of Jehovah differs from that in 1<sup>7</sup>, 9<sup>10</sup>, 15<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> 3<sup>13</sup> Lit., *the evil way*.

<sup>c</sup> 3<sup>13</sup> Lit., *mouth of what is turned away*.

<sup>d</sup> 3<sup>14</sup> Lit., *deliverance*; i. e., the knowledge and ability and skill in applying it in order to achieve a desired end.

<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>16</sup> Following the Gk. in correcting the Heb.

<sup>f</sup> 3<sup>17</sup> Correcting the corrupt Heb. with the aid of the VSS. and the marginal Heb. reading.

<sup>g</sup> 3<sup>18</sup> Lit., *righteousness*. As in Ps. 112<sup>8</sup> and Is. 54<sup>17</sup> the sage evidently has in mind the prosperity and good reputation that are the fruits and evidence of right deeds.

<sup>h</sup> 3<sup>19</sup> Lit., *fine gold and refined*.

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>21</sup>Endowing with wealth those who love me,  
And filling their treasuries full.'

### § 4. The Rôle of Wisdom in the Universe, Pr. 8<sup>22-36</sup>

First of  
God's  
Creation

Pr. ■

<sup>22</sup>The Lord formed me as his first creation,<sup>1</sup>  
The earliest of his works of old.

<sup>23</sup>In the primeval past<sup>j</sup> was I fashioned,<sup>k</sup>  
At the first, before earth existed.

<sup>24</sup>When there were no depths, I was born;  
When there were no springs full<sup>l</sup> of water.

<sup>25</sup>Ere the mountains were set in their places,<sup>m</sup>  
And before there were hills I was born,

<sup>26</sup>Or ever the earth and the fields<sup>n</sup> had been made,  
Or the first of the dust of the world.

Present  
and  
Active  
at the  
Creation

<sup>27</sup>When God set up the heavens, I was there,  
And when he stretched the vault over the deep,

<sup>28</sup>When he made firm the skies above,  
And fixed<sup>o</sup> the fountains of the deep,

<sup>29</sup>And when the Lord set to the sea its bounds,  
So that its waters should not transgress his commands,<sup>p</sup>  
When he laid the foundations of the earth,

<sup>30</sup>Then I was by him as a foster-child,<sup>q</sup>  
And I was his delight from day to day,  
Playing before him at all times,  
Playing upon his habitable earth.

Therefore  
able to  
guide  
men

<sup>31</sup>My delight is to be with mankind;  
<sup>32a</sup>So now, my sons, listen to me,<sup>r</sup>

§ 4 This entire description of Wisdom's place in the universe was intended to inspire confidence in the authority and practical value of the teachings of the wise. Like Gen. 21-3, which connects the origin of the Sabbath with the creation, it traces the conception and birth of Wisdom back to the beginning of the universe. True to Jewish faith, Jehovah is represented as the Creator; but Wisdom was the first and most important of his creations. Wisdom, therefore, is familiar with all the mysteries of the universe and so supremely fitted to instruct and guide man. B. Sir. in 24 gives a somewhat similar picture, but represents Wisdom as the law of Moses and dwelling in the midst of Israel. The picture in Pr. 8 is more universal. While the description in both these passages suggests a complete hypostasis of Wisdom, it seems clear that the author of Pr. 8 and B. Sir. were simply personifying Wisdom and that in their minds it represented the collective doctrines and work of the wisdom teachers.

<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>22</sup> Lit., *way*; i. e., work of creation.

<sup>j</sup> 8<sup>23</sup> Lit., *from everlasting*. Cf. Mi. 5<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>k</sup> 8<sup>23</sup> The Heb. root is probably the same as found in Job 10<sup>11</sup> and Ps. 139<sup>13</sup>, and means *weave together* in the mother's womb. The reference, of course, is to conception. Vs. <sup>34</sup> goes on to tell of Wisdom's birth.

<sup>l</sup> 8<sup>24</sup> Lit., *heavy* or *abounding*.

<sup>m</sup> 8<sup>25</sup> I. e., were set on their deep foundations.

<sup>n</sup> 8<sup>26</sup> Lit., *outside places*. The addition of the fields not only destroys the metre but also anticipates the order of creation. Syr., Lat., and Targ. read *rivers*, but this does not remove the difficulty, it only confirms the conclusion that this word is a scribal addition.

<sup>o</sup> 8<sup>28</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. with the aid of the VSS. and the requirements of the parallelism.

<sup>p</sup> 8<sup>29</sup> The Gk. omits this line, which is probably a gloss suggested by Job 38<sup>11</sup>. It destroys the balanced parallelism and introduces an alien construction.

<sup>q</sup> 8<sup>30</sup> The word may mean *master* or *workman*. It is not found elsewhere in the O.T. The context implies that Wisdom was still a child.

<sup>r</sup> 8<sup>32a</sup> The second member of the vs. clearly belongs where the Gk. puts it, after <sup>34a</sup>.



## THE RÔLE OF WISDOM

- <sup>30</sup>Hear instruction that you may be wise,  
And reject it not.  
<sup>34a</sup>Happy is the man who hears me,  
<sup>32b</sup>And they who follow my counsel,  
<sup>34b</sup>Watching daily at my gates,  
And waiting at my door-posts.  
<sup>35</sup>For he who finds me finds life,<sup>a</sup>  
And wins the favor of the Lord.  
<sup>36</sup>But he who misses me wrongs himself,  
For all who hate me love death.

### § 5. Wisdom's Banquet, Pr. 9<sup>1-6</sup>, 11, 12

**Pr. 9**

- <sup>1</sup>Wisdom has built her house,  
She has set up<sup>t</sup> her seven pillars;  
<sup>2</sup>She has killed her cattle and mixed her wine,  
She also has spread her table.  
<sup>3</sup>She has sent her maidens to proclaim<sup>u</sup>  
On the prominent heights in the city:  
<sup>4</sup>'Let him who is simple turn in!'  
To him who lacks insight she says:  
<sup>5</sup>'Come now and eat my bread,  
And drink of the wine I have mixed!'  
<sup>6</sup>Abandon your folly and live,  
And walk with the guidance of reason!<sup>v</sup>

Bountiful  
preparations

- <sup>11</sup>For by me will your days be prolonged,  
And the years of your life will be lengthened.  
<sup>12</sup>If you are wise, the wisdom is yours;  
If a scoffer, 'tis you who must bear it.

Result of  
acceptance

### § 6. Folly's Banquet, Pr. 9<sup>12-13</sup>

**Pr. 9**

- <sup>13</sup>The woman Folly<sup>w</sup> is clamorous,  
Seductive,<sup>x</sup> and knows no shame.<sup>y</sup>  
<sup>14</sup>She sits at the door of her house,  
At a prominent place in the city,

Folly's  
seductive  
invitation<sub>1</sub>

<sup>a</sup> 8<sup>25</sup> Following the superior marginal reading of the Heb., which is supported by the Lat. and Targ.

§ 5 Continuing the personification, the sage represents Wisdom as preparing a banquet and sending out a universal invitation. The bountiful provisions are the teachings of the wise. The invitation is extended especially to the inexperienced and those devoid of understanding. The didactic purpose and the earnest, hortatory tone of the wise are prominent throughout the section.

<sup>t</sup> 9<sup>1</sup> So Gk. Heb., *heaven*, but the essential idea is that she has set up the pillars in her court where the banquet is to be held, so that the Gk. has probably retained the original reading.

<sup>u</sup> 9<sup>3</sup> So Syr., Lat., and Targ. Heb., *she proclaims*.

<sup>v</sup> 9<sup>6</sup> Vss. 7-10 introduce a different theme, interrupt the close connection between <sup>6</sup> and <sup>11</sup>, and belong with the proverbs in the main body of the book.

§ 6 Here Folly is personified as the antithesis of Wisdom. The author has in mind, however, the extreme types of folly, especially social immorality. Folly, as here portrayed, resembles the harlot of chaps. 5 and 7.

<sup>w</sup> 9<sup>13</sup> Heb., *woman of folly*. Probably it should be corrected to read as above.

<sup>x</sup> 9<sup>13</sup> Following the Syr. and Lat. in revising the Heb. slightly.

<sup>y</sup> 9<sup>13</sup> Heb., *nothing*.

## INTRODUCTION

- <sup>15</sup>Calling to those who pass by  
Who are going right on in their way:  
<sup>16</sup>'Let him who is simple turn in!'  
To him who lacks insight she says:  
<sup>17</sup>'Stolen waters are sweet,  
And bread eaten in secret is pleasant!'  
  
<sup>18</sup>But he knows not that phantoms<sup>a</sup> are there,  
And her guests in the bottomless pit.<sup>a</sup>

### § 7. Consequences of Rejecting Wisdom's Invitation, Pr. 1<sup>20-33</sup>

Fatal  
effect of  
accepting  
it

Wisdom's  
warning  
to those  
who  
reject her  
counsel

#### Pr. 1

- <sup>20</sup>Wisdom cries aloud in the streets,<sup>b</sup>  
In the open places<sup>c</sup> raises her voice;  
<sup>21</sup>On the top of the walls<sup>d</sup> she calls,  
At the entrances of the gates she says:<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>'How long, O ignorant, will you love ignorance,  
And scoffers delight in their scoffing,<sup>f</sup>  
And they that are stupid<sup>g</sup> hate knowledge?  
<sup>23</sup>Give attention<sup>h</sup> to my reproof.  
See, I will show you my purpose,<sup>i</sup>  
Will tell you my decision:  
<sup>24</sup>Because I called, and you refused,  
I stretched out my hand, and none heeded,  
<sup>25</sup>But you ignored all my counsel,  
And my reproof you rejected,  
<sup>26</sup>I too will laugh in your calamity;  
I will mock when terror<sup>j</sup> o'ertakes you,  
<sup>27</sup>When terror like a storm comes upon you,  
And your calamity comes like a whirlwind,  
When distress and anguish befall you.<sup>k</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer,  
They will seek me but will not find me,  
<sup>29</sup>For they have hated knowledge,

<sup>a</sup> 9<sup>18</sup> Lit., the shades, i. e., the dwellers in the realm of death.

<sup>a</sup> 9<sup>18</sup> I. e., the abode of the dead. For a vivid description, cf. Job 31<sup>7-19</sup>.

§ 7 While this section in the book of Pr. stands before, it logically belongs after the description of Wisdom's and Folly's banquet in 3, 9. The warning tone suggests the rebuffs that the wise often received from those whom they sought to reach. As in the preceding sections, personified Wisdom represents the wisdom teachers and their practical teachings. In 22, 23, 27 the usual couplets are expanded into triplets. Possibly the third line in each case is an addition.

<sup>b</sup> 120 So Gk., supported by the parallelism. Heb., street.

<sup>c</sup> 120 I. e., the open space at the entrance of the city gates where the people assembled.

<sup>d</sup> 121 So Gk. Heb., noisy places, reading according to the demands of the metre and parallelism.

<sup>e</sup> 121 The Heb. text has been expanded by the addition of the interpretative glosses, in the city . . . her words. The Gk. is further expanded.

<sup>f</sup> 121 This line may be secondary, for in <sup>g</sup> only the ignorant and fools are mentioned.

<sup>g</sup> 121 This word, usually translated fool, means those who are too dull or inert to desire knowledge and practical training.

<sup>h</sup> 121 Lit., turn.

<sup>i</sup> 121 Lit., pour forth my spirit; i. e., my innermost thought.

<sup>j</sup> 121 Lit., your fear, but the possessive pronoun refers to the victims of the fear.

<sup>k</sup> 121 The first two lines, with the preceding verse, make two couplets with complete parallelism. Possibly this last line is a later addition from Ps. 113<sup>3</sup>.

## CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION

And have not chosen the fear of the Lord.

<sup>30</sup>They have rejected my counsel,  
All my reproof they despised.

<sup>31</sup>They shall eat of the fruit of their conduct,  
And with their own counsels be sated,

<sup>32</sup>For the aversion<sup>1</sup> of the ignorant slays them,  
And the indifference<sup>m</sup> of fools destroys them.

<sup>33</sup>But he that heeds me dwells secure  
And free from the fear of harm.'

The effect  
of neg-  
lecting or  
heeding  
her  
teachings

§ 8. Reward of a Persistent Search for Wisdom, Pr. 21-9, 20, 10-19, 312-15, 47-9,  
316-18, 420-22, 32, 45a-e, 321-26

Pr. 2

<sup>1</sup>My son, if you heed my words  
And store my commands in your mind,

<sup>2</sup>Attentively listening to wisdom,  
Applying your mind to reason,

<sup>3</sup>If you call to understanding  
And cry aloud to reason,

<sup>4</sup>If you will but seek her as silver,  
And search for her as for hid treasures,

<sup>5</sup>You shall then understand true religion  
And gain a knowledge of God;

<sup>6</sup>For the Lord gives wisdom,  
From his mouth come knowledge and insight;

<sup>7</sup>He stores up sound wisdom for the upright,  
He is a shield to those who live blamelessly,

<sup>8</sup>That he may guard the course of justice,  
And protect the way of his faithful ones.<sup>n</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Then you shall understand justice and judgment  
And equity, every good path,

<sup>20</sup>That you may walk in the way of good men,  
And keep in the paths of the righteous.<sup>o</sup>

The  
knowl-  
edge and  
insight  
that God  
gives to  
those  
who seek  
wisdom

<sup>10</sup>For wisdom shall enter your mind,  
And knowledge shall be pleasant to you,

<sup>11</sup>Discretion shall watch over you,  
And understanding shall guard you,

<sup>12</sup>To save you from doing wrong,  
From men whose speech is perverting,

The  
value of  
wisdom  
in deliv-  
ering  
from  
temp-  
tation and  
evil men  
and  
women

<sup>1</sup> <sup>112</sup> Lit., *turning aside*; i. e., from instruction.

<sup>m</sup> <sup>112</sup> Or, *careless ease*; i. e., the lack of desire and zeal to ascertain knowledge.

§ 8 The preceding section presented the disadvantages of rejecting and this describes the advantages of following the counsels of the wisdom teachers. The thought in the first part of the section is closely knit together by a series of connectives. The section as a whole suggests very clearly the aims that the wisdom teachers sought to attain.

<sup>n</sup> <sup>2</sup> Lit., *his pious ones*, following the Gk. and Syr. Lat. and Targ. omit *his*.

<sup>o</sup> <sup>20</sup> Transferring this verse, as suggested by Toy (Pr., p. 39), to the place where it logically belongs.

## INTRODUCTION

- <sup>13</sup>Who abandon the paths of right  
 To walk in ways that are dark,  
<sup>14</sup>Who rejoice in doing wrong  
 And take pleasure in evil acts,  
<sup>15</sup>Men whose paths are crooked,  
 And their ways of life perverted.<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>To deliver you from the dissolute woman,<sup>q</sup>  
 From the harlot with words that entice,<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>Who has left the friend of her youth<sup>s</sup>  
 And forgotten the sacred covenant.<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>18</sup>For her house leads down to death<sup>u</sup>  
 And her paths to the place of the dead.  
<sup>19</sup>None who go in to her return  
 Or attain the paths of life.

The in-  
 estimable  
 value of  
 wisdom

- 3 <sup>13</sup>Happy the man who finds wisdom,  
 And he who gains understanding.  
<sup>14</sup>For her profit<sup>v</sup> excels that of silver,  
 And her increase the finest gold.  
<sup>15</sup>She is more precious than corals,  
 And no treasures<sup>w</sup> with her can compare.

The  
 honor  
 which  
 she  
 brings

- 4 <sup>7</sup>The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom,<sup>x</sup>  
 And with all you have gotten get insight.  
<sup>8</sup>Prize her highly, and she will exalt you,  
 She will honor you if you embrace her,  
<sup>9</sup>On your head place a chaplet of beauty,  
 And bestow a fair crown upon you.

Long life  
 and  
 pros-  
 perity

- 3 <sup>16</sup>In her right hand is long life,  
 In her left are riches and honor.  
<sup>17</sup>Her ways are pleasant ways,  
 And all her paths are peaceful.  
<sup>18</sup>She gives life to those who grasp her,  
 They are happy who hold her fast.

Security

- 4 <sup>20</sup>My son, to my words give heed,  
 To my sayings incline your ear;

<sup>p</sup> 21<sup>5</sup> Omitting one letter in the Heb. that destroys the parallelism.

<sup>q</sup> 21<sup>6</sup> Lit., *strange woman*; but this term seems to mean the woman who has broken away from the bonds of family and society. Possibly the term arose because most of the harlots in Israel were of non-Jewish origin.

<sup>r</sup> 21<sup>6</sup> Lit., *the stranger who makes smooth her words*.

<sup>s</sup> 21<sup>7</sup> I. e., her husband; cf. Hos. 2<sup>9</sup>, 17, Ezek. 16<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>t</sup> 21<sup>7</sup> So Gk., Aquila, Sym., Theod., and Targ. Heb., *the covenant of her God*. The reference is to her marriage bonds.

<sup>u</sup> 21<sup>8</sup> The Heb. is uncertain. Gk. reads, *she has set her house by death*; but this makes little sense.

<sup>v</sup> 31<sup>4</sup> Lit., *gain that comes from traffic*.

<sup>w</sup> 31<sup>5</sup> So the VSS. Heb., *not all that you desire*.

<sup>x</sup> 4<sup>7</sup> The Heb. is elliptical but vigorous. The meaning is: the first and most important thing is to get wisdom. It is more important than all other possessions.

## REWARD OF PERSISTENT SEARCH

- <sup>21</sup>Let them not depart from your sight;<sup>y</sup>  
 Keep them well in mind.<sup>z</sup>
- <sup>22</sup>For they are life to those who find them,  
 And healing to all their being.<sup>a</sup>
- 3** <sup>2</sup>For length of days and years of life  
 And peace will they add to you.
- 4** <sup>5a</sup>Get wisdom, get understanding.  
<sup>6</sup>Forsake her not, and she will keep you;  
 Love her, and she will preserve you.
- 3** <sup>21</sup>My son, keep wisdom and discretion,  
 Let them not depart from your sight;<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>And they shall be life to your being,  
 A beautiful chain<sup>c</sup> for your neck.  
<sup>23</sup>You shall then go your way securely,  
 And your foot shall never stumble.  
<sup>24</sup>When you sit<sup>d</sup> you shall not be afraid,  
 When you lie down, your sleep shall be sweet.  
<sup>25</sup>Be not afraid of sudden terror,<sup>e</sup>  
 Nor the ruin of the wicked when it comes;  
<sup>26</sup>For the Lord will be your confidence,  
 And will keep your foot from being taken.

Peace  
of mind

## II

## GOD

### § 9. What Can Man Know of God? Pr. 30<sup>1-4</sup>

- Pr. 30** <sup>1</sup>The utterance of the man: I have wearied myself, O God,<sup>a</sup>  
 I have wearied myself, O God, and am exhausted;<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>For I am the most stupid of men;<sup>c</sup>  
 I have not human intelligence;

Limita-  
tions of  
man's  
knowl-  
edge of  
God

<sup>y</sup> 4<sup>21</sup> Lit., eyes. Cf. 3<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>z</sup> 4<sup>21</sup> Lit., within your heart.

<sup>a</sup> 4<sup>22</sup> So Toy: lit., flesh. Cf. 3<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> 3<sup>21</sup> Transposing the Heb. as the context and sense demand.

<sup>c</sup> 3<sup>22</sup> Lit., beauty.

<sup>d</sup> 3<sup>24</sup> So Gk. Heb., lie down.

<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>25</sup> Or the terror that overtakes the ignorant.

**God.**—The sages, like all the Hebrew teachers, assumed the existence of God and his rule over the universe. Most of the problems that concern the modern ethical and religious teacher had never dawned upon them.

§ 9 This difficult passage is introduced by the superscription, *The Words of Agur the Son of Jacheh, the Massite*. The last word is based on a reconstruction of the Heb. that reads, *oracle of the man*, and he or a copyist has repeated the opening words of the original section, *I have wearied myself, O God*. The demands of the parallelism, however, indicate that either this strange introduction is original or else it represents a text that has become hopelessly corrupt. The questions which follow are reverent but evidently asked by one who, like Job and the author of Eccles., is overwhelmed by the difficulties in the way of him who would fathom the mysteries of the divine character.

<sup>a</sup> 30<sup>1</sup> Dividing the Heb. vowels as the context requires. The Gk. and Lat. translators found great difficulty with this vs. Gk., *These things says the man to those who trust in God, and I cease*.

<sup>b</sup> 30<sup>1</sup> Slightly changing the punctuation of the Heb.

<sup>c</sup> 30<sup>2</sup> Lit., *I am more stupid than men*. Evidently the writer here protests against certain wise men, who, like Job's friends, spoke with dogmatic assurance.



## GOD

<sup>3</sup>And I have not learned wisdom;  
I have no knowledge of the Holy One.  
<sup>4</sup>Who has ascended to heaven and descended?<sup>d</sup>  
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?  
Who has bound the waters in a garment?<sup>e</sup>  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is his name,<sup>f</sup> and what is his son's name?<sup>g</sup>

§ 10. Nature of God, Pr. 21<sup>1, 20</sup>, 15<sup>11, 3</sup>, 5<sup>21</sup>, 19<sup>21</sup>, 25<sup>2</sup>, 16<sup>11</sup>, 21<sup>3</sup>, 15<sup>9</sup>

Omnipo-  
tent

**Pr. 21** <sup>1</sup>A king's heart in the hand of the Lord is like watercourses:  
He turns it wherever he will.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>30</sup>There is no wisdom nor insight  
Nor counsel against the Lord.<sup>i</sup>

Omnis-  
cient

**15** <sup>11</sup>The lower world lies open before him,<sup>j</sup>  
How much more then the hearts of men!<sup>k</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The eyes of the Lord are all seeing,  
Keeping watch on both wicked and good.

**5** <sup>21</sup>For the ways of a man are before the Lord's eyes,  
And all his paths he makes level.<sup>l</sup>

Un-  
change-  
able

**19** <sup>21</sup>There are many plans in a man's mind,  
But the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

**25** <sup>2</sup>The glory of God is concealing something;  
The glory of kings is searching out something.

Un-  
search-  
able

**16** <sup>11</sup>A just balance and scales<sup>m</sup> are the Lord's;<sup>n</sup>  
All the weights of the bag are his work.

Just

**21** <sup>3</sup>To do what is just and right  
Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

<sup>d,304</sup> The inference of Job 38 is approved. Probably the author was also familiar with Pr. 8<sup>24-29</sup>.

<sup>e,304</sup> Cf. Job 26<sup>3</sup>, where the garment is the clouds.

<sup>f,304</sup> *I. e.*, what is really known about Jehovah's history and real character? Possibly there is also an allusion to the popular mythology.

<sup>g,304</sup> So Gk. In the Heb. a scribe has apparently added from Job 38<sup>2</sup>, *if you know*. It is not supported by the metre or parallelism.

§ 10 The wise men were not primarily theologians, but moralists and practical teachers and guides. Their chief theme was man in his different relations. The proverbs included in this group do not afford a basis for a systematic theology. They do, however, reflect incidentally the beliefs of the wise regarding Jehovah and his relation to the universe and man. He is the God of the great ethical prophets, active in all human affairs, the supreme creator and ruler of the universe, just and merciful. He is also more interested in the deeds and purposes of his children than in the formal acts of worship and ceremonial. The theology of the wise men shows a great advance beyond that of the early prophets, for Jehovah is here thought of not merely as the God of Israel but as the divine friend of man, in intimate touch with each individual. Thus the sages prepared the way for that personal interpretation of God as the father of his children which characterizes the teachings of Jesus. With the sages, as with the prophets, the ultimate basis for right doing is found in the character and demands of Jehovah.

<sup>h,214</sup> *I. e.*, it is as thoroughly under control as the water in an irrigation canal.

<sup>i,2130</sup> *I. e.*, no human mind can prevail against Jehovah.

<sup>j,1511</sup> *I. e.*, Jehovah controls even the world of the shades.

<sup>k,1511</sup> *Lit., the children of men.*

<sup>l,1511</sup> *Or weights.*

<sup>m,1611</sup> *Lit., Balance and just weights.* Possibly *just* is a scribal addition.

<sup>n,1611</sup> The proverbs that precede and follow this all relate to the king, from which it may possibly be inferred that the original read, *the king's*, and that a later scribe identified it with the divine king, Jehovah.

## NATURE OF GOD

- 15** <sup>9</sup>The conduct of the wicked is abhorrent to him,  
But he loves<sup>o</sup> the man eager to do right. Loving

### § 11. God the Creator, Pr. 3<sup>10</sup>, 20, 22<sup>2</sup>, 20<sup>12</sup>

- Pr. 3** <sup>10</sup>By wisdom the Lord founded the earth,  
By understanding established the heavens;  
<sup>20</sup>By his knowledge the depths are opened,  
And the skies deposit the dew. All  
things  
made  
by him
- 22** <sup>2</sup>The rich and the poor meet together,  
The Lord is maker of them all.<sup>p</sup>
- 20** <sup>12</sup>The hearing ear, and the seeing eye—  
The Lord has made them both.

### § 12. God the Supreme Ruler, Pr. 16<sup>1</sup>, 20<sup>24</sup>, 16<sup>9</sup>, 33, 21<sup>31</sup>, 16<sup>4</sup>

- Pr. 16** <sup>1</sup>The plans of the mind<sup>a</sup> belong to man,  
But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.<sup>r</sup> Human  
plans  
and acts
- 20** <sup>24</sup>A man's steps are directed<sup>a</sup> by the Lord;  
How can man understand his way?<sup>q</sup>
- 16** <sup>9</sup>Man's mind maps out his way,  
But the Lord directs his steps.
- <sup>33</sup>The lot<sup>t</sup> is cast into the lap,  
But its every decision is from the Lord. The lot
- 21** <sup>31</sup>The horse is prepared for the battle,  
But victory depends on the Lord. Victory
- 16** <sup>4</sup>The Lord made everything for its own end,—  
Even the wicked for the day of evil.<sup>u</sup> All  
things

### § 13. God the Judge and Rewarder of Human Actions, Pr. 16<sup>2</sup>, 21<sup>2</sup>, 29<sup>26</sup>, 17<sup>3</sup>, 10<sup>29</sup>, 3, 12<sup>2</sup>, 25<sup>21-22</sup>, 16<sup>7</sup>

- Pr. 16** <sup>2</sup>A man thinks all he does is pure,<sup>v</sup>  
But the Lord tests the disposition.<sup>w</sup> Tester of  
man's  
acts and  
purposes

<sup>o</sup> 15<sup>9</sup> Lit., *follows after*; i. e., as a guide.

§ 11 The older Heb. conception of the creation is here reflected. The earth is a great level mass supported by pillars on foundations that rest on the surrounding ocean. Through the rifts in the earth come the springs and the rivers that well up from the depths below.

<sup>p</sup> 22<sup>2</sup> Of course the main teaching of this proverb is that all men, whatever be their social standing, are Jehovah's creation.

§ 12 That Jehovah overrules all the varied activities and experiences of men is here taught plainly and unhesitatingly; and yet the wise men never cease to emphasize the freedom of the will and human responsibility. Even in these proverbs they assume that man will continue to plan and to strive to realize his ends. God, however, guides and shapes all in accord with his omniscient purpose.

<sup>q</sup> 16<sup>1</sup> Lit., *arrangements of the heart*; i. e., what man plans in his mind.

<sup>r</sup> 16<sup>1</sup> The meaning seems to be that man may plan, but God alone can give him apt words that will enable him to realize his plans.

<sup>s</sup> 20<sup>24</sup> Lit., *a man's goings are from*.

<sup>t</sup> 16<sup>33</sup> The use of the lot as a means of determining the divine will was practically universal throughout antiquity and appears in both the O.T. and N.T. This proverb clearly voices the popular belief.

<sup>u</sup> 16<sup>4</sup> I. e., the judgment day. While this sounds like an extreme statement of the doctrine of predestination, it must be remembered that the wise always taught that a man was good or wicked according to his own choices and acts, not by divine decree.

§ 13 Here the wise, like Jesus, put the emphasis on the motives and inward states of mind rather than the merely outward acts.

<sup>v</sup> 16<sup>2</sup> Lit., *all a man's ways are pure in his eyes*.

<sup>w</sup> 16<sup>2</sup> Lit., *spirits*.

## GOD

- 21 <sup>2</sup>A man thinks all he does is right,  
But the Lord tests the motive.<sup>x</sup>
- 29 <sup>26</sup>Many seek for the ruler's favor,  
But the Lord decides each man's fate.
- 17 <sup>3</sup>The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold;  
The assayer of hearts is the Lord.
- 10 <sup>29</sup>The Lord<sup>y</sup> is a stronghold to him who does right,  
But destruction to those who do wrong.  
<sup>3</sup>The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,  
But he disappoints the desire of the wicked.
- 12 <sup>2</sup>A good man will obtain favor from the Lord,  
But a designing man<sup>z</sup> he will condemn.
- 25 <sup>21</sup>If your enemy hungers, give him food;  
If he thirsts, give him water to drink;  
<sup>22</sup>For you will heap coals of fire on his head,  
And the Lord will reward you.
- 16 <sup>7</sup>When a man's life pleases the Lord,  
Even his enemies he reconciles to him.

Reward-  
er of con-  
duct

§ 14. God the Foe of All Forms of Evil, Pr. 28<sup>9</sup>, 16<sup>5</sup>, 33<sup>3-34</sup>, 11<sup>20</sup>, 21<sup>27</sup>, 33<sup>2</sup>, 15<sup>29</sup>,  
20<sup>10</sup>, 11<sup>1</sup>, 12<sup>22</sup>, 15<sup>26</sup>, <sup>3</sup>, 17<sup>5</sup>, 6<sup>16-19</sup>

Pride

- Pr. 28 <sup>9</sup>He who turns away his ear from hearing instruction,  
His prayer also will be despised.
- 16 <sup>6</sup>Every proud-minded man is abhorrent to the Lord,  
Assuredly<sup>a</sup> he shall not go unpunished.
- 3 <sup>33</sup>The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked,  
But he blesses the home of him who does right.  
<sup>34</sup>Surely he scoffs at the scoffers,  
But to the humble he ever shows favor.
- 11 <sup>20</sup>The Lord detests the evil-minded,  
But is well pleased with him who lives uprightly.
- 21 <sup>27</sup>The sacrifice of the wicked is despised,  
And all the more when brought with evil intent.
- 3 <sup>32</sup>For the perverted man is abhorrent to the Lord,  
But his friendship is with the upright.
- 15 <sup>29</sup>The Lord holds aloof from the wicked,  
But hears the prayer of the upright.
- 20 <sup>10</sup>Varying weights<sup>b</sup> and varying measures  
Are both abhorrent to the Lord.
- 11 <sup>1</sup>A false balance is abhorrent to the Lord,  
But a just weight is his delight.

Wicked-  
ness

False  
weights  
and  
measures

<sup>x</sup> 21<sup>2</sup> Lit., *hearts*; i. e., inward states of mind. This proverb is simply a variant of 16<sup>2</sup>.  
<sup>y</sup> 10<sup>29</sup> The Heb. is usually translated, *the way of the Lord*, but a very slight change gives the above felicitous reading.

<sup>z</sup> 12<sup>2</sup> Lit., *a man of devices*.

§ 14 The word translated *abhorrent* or *despised* (lit., *an abomination*) is applied in the earlier prophetic and legal literature only to what is of heathen origin or contrary to Israel's ceremonial usage, as, e. g., the worship of idols or offering children in sacrifice. In Lev. and Ezek. it is used of acts of unchastity. By the wise it is employed in describing immoral or unjust acts. Here the wise, like the prophets, put ethics squarely on a religious basis.

<sup>a</sup> 16<sup>5</sup> Lit., *hand to hand*; i. e., *my hand upon it*; a strong assertion.

<sup>b</sup> 20<sup>10</sup> I. e., weights that purport to be the same but vary, thus favoring fraud.

## THE FOE OF EVIL

- 12 <sup>22</sup>Lying lips are abhorrent to the Lord,  
But they who deal honestly are his delight.  
15 <sup>26</sup>Wicked plans are abhorrent to the Lord,  
But pleasant words are pure.<sup>o</sup>

Lying

- <sup>8</sup>The sacrifice of the wicked is abhorrent to the Lord,  
But the prayer of the upright is a delight to him!  
17 <sup>15</sup>He who vindicates the wicked and he who condemns the righteous  
Are both abhorrent to the Lord.  
6 <sup>16</sup>There are six things that the Lord hates,  
Yes, seven are abhorrent to him:  
<sup>17</sup>Haughty eyes and a lying tongue,  
And hands that shed innocent blood,  
<sup>18</sup>A mind that devises wicked schemes,  
Feet that make haste to do evil,<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>19</sup>A false witness who breathes out lies,  
And he who sows strife among brothers.

The  
sacrifice  
of the  
wicked

Unjust  
decisions

Seven  
hateful  
sins

§ 15. God the Champion of the Needy and the Faithful, Pr. 15<sup>25</sup>, 22<sup>22</sup>, 23, 12, 18<sup>10</sup>,  
16<sup>3</sup>, 30<sup>5</sup>, <sup>6</sup>, 20<sup>22</sup>

- Pr. 15 <sup>25</sup>The Lord roots up the house of the proud,  
But establishes the border<sup>e</sup> of the widow.  
22 <sup>22</sup>Rob not the poor because they are poor,  
Nor oppress the poor at the city gate,<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>23</sup>For the Lord will plead their cause,  
And rob those who deprive them of life.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>The eyes of the Lord are on him who guards knowledge,<sup>h</sup>  
But he overthrows the words of the faithless.  
18 <sup>10</sup>The name of the Lord is a strong tower,  
To which the righteous runs and is safe.  
16 <sup>3</sup>Entrust what you do to the Lord,<sup>i</sup>  
Then your plans will succeed.<sup>j</sup>  
30 <sup>5</sup>Every word of God is tried;  
He is a shield to those who trust in him.  
<sup>6</sup>Add not to his words,<sup>k</sup>  
Lest he reprove you and you be found a liar.  
20 <sup>22</sup>Say not, 'I will be revenged for a wrong';  
Wait for the Lord, he will save you.

The  
widow

The  
wise

The  
righteous

Those  
who  
trust him

<sup>o</sup> 15<sup>26</sup> So Heb., but this inconsequential remark can hardly represent the original text, nor do the varying readings of the VSS. help us.

<sup>d</sup> 6<sup>18</sup> So Gk. Heb. inserts the superfluous phrase, *to run*.

§ 15 As in the philanthropic laws of Dt., Jehovah is the defender of the defenseless.

<sup>e</sup> 15<sup>28</sup> I. e., the bounds of the ancestral estate. Cf. Dt. 19<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> 22<sup>22</sup> This is one of the proverbs derived from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Intro.*, p. 15).

<sup>g</sup> 22<sup>23</sup> Or *deprive of life those who rob them*.

<sup>h</sup> 22<sup>13</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. as demanded by the context and supported by parallels in Ps. 34<sup>15</sup>, 101<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> 16<sup>3</sup> Lit., *cast on Jehovah your works*.

<sup>j</sup> 16<sup>3</sup> Lit., *be established*.

<sup>k</sup> 30<sup>6</sup> The reference is probably to an established canon of Scriptures. The sage may have had in mind the new doctrines, *e. g.*, of the resurrection, that were then being taught by certain teachers. By some the vs. is regarded as an answer to the questioning spirit revealed in 30<sup>2-4</sup> of § 9.

# MAN

## III

# MAN

## A

### THE NATURE OF MAN

§ 16. Man's Universal Characteristics, Pr. 27<sup>19</sup>, 1, 21<sup>2</sup>, 14<sup>12</sup>, 20<sup>9</sup>, 27, 27<sup>20</sup>, 14<sup>10</sup>, 13, 13<sup>12</sup>, 19, 15<sup>30</sup>, 25<sup>25</sup>, 15<sup>13</sup>, 12<sup>25</sup>, 15<sup>15</sup>, 27<sup>8</sup>, 18<sup>14</sup>, 14<sup>30</sup>, 17<sup>22</sup>, 27<sup>17</sup>, 20<sup>11</sup>, 27<sup>21</sup>, 20<sup>6</sup>

- Pr. 27** <sup>19</sup>As in water face answers to face,  
So the heart of man to man.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Do not boast what you will do tomorrow,  
For you know not what a day may bring forth.
- 21** <sup>2</sup>A man thinks all he does is right,  
But the Lord tests the motive.<sup>b</sup>
- 14** <sup>12</sup>There is a way which seems right to a man,  
But the end of it is the road to death.
- 20** <sup>9</sup>Who can say, 'I have cleansed my heart,  
I am pure from my sin'?  
<sup>27</sup>Man's spirit<sup>c</sup> is the lamp of the Lord,  
Searching all the chambers of the soul.<sup>d</sup>
- 27** <sup>20</sup>Sheol and Abaddon<sup>e</sup> are never satisfied,  
So man's desires<sup>f</sup> are never satisfied.
- 14** <sup>10</sup>Every heart knows its own sorrow,  
And no other<sup>g</sup> shares its joy.  
<sup>13</sup>Even in laughter the heart may be<sup>h</sup> sad,  
And the end of joy may be sorrow.
- 13** <sup>12</sup>Hope deferred makes the heart of man sick,  
But desire fulfilled<sup>i</sup> is a tree of life.

All men  
akin

Finite

Fallible

Possessed  
of a con-  
science

Never  
con-  
tented

Psycho-  
logically  
isolated

Keenly  
sensitive  
to pain  
or joy

**The Nature of Man.**—The wise do not give a systematic treatment of man's psychological characteristics, but simply observations regarding those peculiarities which impressed them most. In many respects their insight into human character was exceedingly keen. Sometimes they anticipated the profoundest conclusions of modern psychology. They evidently recognized the presence of a conscience, which they likened not to a voice but to a lamp. Also they were aware of the great power that the mind had over the body and of the supreme importance of a calm, hopeful mental state.

<sup>a</sup> 27<sup>19</sup> This is one of the most difficult and doubtful proverbs in the book. The current rendering is based on a slightly revised Heb. text which reads, lit.,

*As in water face to face  
So the hearts of man to man.*

This apparently means that as water reflects a physical image, so a man finds in the mind of his fellow man an exact reflection of his own, i. e., all men have certain common mental characteristics. The Gk. has for the first line simply, *As face to face*.

<sup>b</sup> 21<sup>2</sup> Lit., *hearts*.

<sup>c</sup> 20<sup>27</sup> *I. e.*, the divine spirit, representing ethical and intellectual qualities, that God imparted to man at his creation. Cf. the Heb. idea in Gen. 27.

<sup>d</sup> 20<sup>27</sup> Lit., *body*, but this stands for the whole man and especially his moral and spiritual nature.

<sup>e</sup> 27<sup>20</sup> A synonym of Sheol.

<sup>f</sup> 27<sup>20</sup> Lit., *the eyes of man*. But eyes represent desires, as in Ecc. 2<sup>10</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> 14<sup>10</sup> Lit., *stranger*; i. e., another. So Toy (Pr., p. 287).

<sup>h</sup> 14<sup>13</sup> The current translation of the proverb is not in accord with the optimistic spirit of the book of Pr. The meaning seems to be that joy and sorrow are mingled in life, and man is subject to both.

<sup>i</sup> 13<sup>12</sup> Lit., *when it comes*, but the above represents the corresponding Eng. idiom. The tree of life symbolizes mental and physical health.



## MAN'S CHARACTERISTICS

- <sup>19</sup>Desire realized is sweet to the soul,  
But it is abhorrent to fools to depart from evil.<sup>j</sup>
- 15 <sup>30</sup>The light of the eyes<sup>k</sup> rejoices the heart;  
Good tidings make the bones fat.
- 25 <sup>25</sup>As cold water to a thirsty man,  
So is good news from a far country.<sup>l</sup>
- 15 <sup>13</sup>A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance,  
But by inward<sup>m</sup> sorrow the spirit is broken.
- 12 <sup>25</sup>Anxiety in a man's mind depresses it,  
But a kind word makes it happy.
- 15 <sup>15</sup>All days are evil to the downcast,<sup>n</sup>  
But the cheerful man has a continual feast.
- 27 <sup>8</sup>Like a bird that wanders from its nest  
Is a man who wanders from his home.<sup>o</sup>
- 18 <sup>14</sup>A man's spirit sustains him in sickness,<sup>p</sup>  
But who can raise up a broken spirit?
- 14 <sup>30</sup>A tranquil mind<sup>q</sup> is the life of the body,<sup>r</sup>  
But jealousy<sup>s</sup> rots the bones.
- 17 <sup>22</sup>A joyful heart is good medicine,  
But a broken spirit dries up the bones.
- 27 <sup>17</sup>As iron sharpens iron,  
So a man sharpens the face of his friend.<sup>t</sup>
- 20 <sup>11</sup>Even a child makes himself known by his deeds,  
Whether his conduct is pure and right.
- 27 <sup>21</sup>The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold;  
A man is tested by the praise he receives.<sup>u</sup>
- 20 <sup>6</sup>Many a man proclaims his own kindness,<sup>v</sup>  
But a trustworthy man who can find?

Devoted  
to his  
home

Subject  
to  
mental  
states

Devel-  
oped by  
associa-  
tion

Revealed  
by acts

Tested  
by rep-  
utation

Real  
friendship  
rare

### § 17. Advantages of Old Age and Youth, Pr. 20<sup>29</sup>, 16<sup>31</sup>

- Pr. 20** <sup>29</sup>The glory of young men is their strength,  
And the beauty of old men the hoary head.

Each age  
has its  
glory

<sup>j</sup> 13<sup>19</sup> The antithesis is not natural. Probably a couplet has fallen out, leaving this one proverb instead of two.

<sup>k</sup> 15<sup>30</sup> *I. e.*, the joy shining through the eyes either of the bearer or recipient of good news. It is equivalent to good news.

<sup>l</sup> 25<sup>25</sup> This proverb represents universal human experience, but is especially fitting on the lips of a scattered race like the Jews.

<sup>m</sup> 15<sup>13</sup> *Lit., of heart or mind.*

<sup>n</sup> 15<sup>15</sup> *Lit., All the days of the downcast (or afflicted) are evil.* The antithesis is best brought out by the above rendering.

<sup>o</sup> 27<sup>8</sup> *So Toy; lit., place.*

<sup>p</sup> 18<sup>14</sup> *Lit., supports (or sustains) sickness.* The sage here enunciates a profound psychological principle. Sickness or misfortune cannot crush the man of indomitable spirit, but it is impossible to help or heal the one who has lost courage.

<sup>q</sup> 14<sup>30</sup> *Lit., heart of health; i. e., a calm, soothing habit of mind.*

<sup>r</sup> 14<sup>30</sup> *Lit., flesh.*

<sup>s</sup> 14<sup>30</sup> Jealousy here evidently stands as a type of passion in general, the opposite of the calm, peaceful spirit.

<sup>t</sup> 27<sup>17</sup> This proverb describes aptly the value of social intercourse in the development of character.

<sup>u</sup> 27<sup>21</sup> *Lit., according to his praise; i. e., what men say about him.* Cf. 17<sup>3</sup>, § 13, where Jehovah is the one who tests men.

<sup>v</sup> 20<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, professes that he is ready by kindly acts to show his friendliness.

§ 17 These two proverbs supplement each other. They also reflect the deference always paid in the East to elders.

# MAN

16 <sup>31</sup>The hoary head is a crown of glory,<sup>w</sup>  
When acquired by upright living.<sup>x</sup>

## B

### THE EDUCATION OF MAN

§ 18. Folly—The Absence of Education, Pr. 22<sup>15</sup>, 14<sup>18</sup>, 1<sup>7</sup>

Natural  
to youth

**Pr. 22** <sup>15</sup>Folly is inherent in the mind of a child,  
But the rod of discipline will drive it from him.<sup>a</sup>

14 <sup>18</sup>Simpletons inherit folly,  
But men of sense<sup>b</sup> secure<sup>c</sup> knowledge.

1 <sup>7</sup>Reverence for the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,  
But the foolish despise wisdom and discipline.

Due to  
the neg-  
lect of  
education

§ 19. Characteristics of a Fool, Pr. 17<sup>24</sup>, 14<sup>7</sup>, 24<sup>7</sup>, 26<sup>7</sup>, <sup>9</sup>, 19<sup>3</sup>, 15<sup>21</sup>, 10<sup>23</sup>, 14<sup>1</sup>, 18<sup>2</sup>,  
12<sup>23</sup>, 14<sup>33</sup>, 12<sup>16</sup>, 14<sup>9</sup>, <sup>24</sup>, 26<sup>6</sup>, 24<sup>9</sup>, 29<sup>9</sup>, 27<sup>22</sup>, 26<sup>11</sup>, 27<sup>3</sup>, 17<sup>12</sup>

Inatten-  
tive

**Pr. 17** <sup>24</sup>Wisdom is the goal<sup>d</sup> of a man of understanding,  
But the eyes of a fool are at the ends of the earth.

14 <sup>7</sup>Go from the presence of a fool  
For his lips do not utter knowledge.<sup>e</sup>

24 <sup>7</sup>Wisdom is beyond the reach of a fool,<sup>f</sup>  
He does not open his mouth at the gates.<sup>g</sup>

26 <sup>7</sup>The legs of the lame hang loose,<sup>h</sup>  
And a proverb in the mouth of fools.

<sup>9</sup>Like a thorn-stick in the hand of a drunken man,<sup>i</sup>  
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

19 <sup>3</sup>A man's folly brings ruin upon him,<sup>j</sup>  
And then he rages<sup>k</sup> against the Lord.

Unapt in  
expres-  
sion

Dissatis-  
fied with  
his lot

<sup>w</sup> 16<sup>31</sup> Cf. for this same idea in expanded form B. Sir. 25<sup>3-4</sup>.

<sup>x</sup> 16<sup>31</sup> Lit., *in the way of righteousness it is found*.

The Education of Man.—For a study of the educational aims and methods of the wise, cf. Introd., I.

§ 18 The wise recognized different types of folly: (1) that which came from inexperience and was especially characteristic of youth; (2) stupidity due to physical and mental limitations or characteristic of an unawakened mind; (3) obstinate, defiant folly which was the result of deliberate choice.

<sup>a</sup> 22<sup>15</sup> Menander said that he who was not flogged was not educated.

<sup>b</sup> 14<sup>18</sup> Or *the prudent*.

<sup>c</sup> 14<sup>18</sup> So Gk., supported by the context. Heb. (*are crowned?*) is doubtful; Syr., *share*.

§ 19 The wise held up the faults of the fool before their disciples to turn them from folly.

<sup>d</sup> 17<sup>24</sup> Lit., *is before the face*. The parallelism indicates that the meaning is as rendered above.

<sup>e</sup> 14<sup>7</sup> Following Toy in emending the Heb.

<sup>f</sup> 24<sup>7</sup> The vs. is very obscure. The above rendering is based on a slightly revised Heb. text.

The traditional text reads, *Corals to a fool are wisdom*.

<sup>g</sup> 24<sup>7</sup> In 17<sup>23</sup>, 18<sup>6</sup> the fool is blamed for his readiness to talk. Probably the meaning here is that in public councils he has nothing to say.

<sup>h</sup> 26<sup>7</sup> The rendering of this line is doubtful. If the above is correct, the meaning is that a fool can use a wise proverb no more skillfully and effectively than a lame man his legs.

<sup>i</sup> 26<sup>9</sup> Again the exact meaning of the Heb. is a little doubtful. The current translation conveys a wrong idea, for the verb does not mean *to go into* or *to stick into* the hand, but rather *to possess*. The idea seems to be that a wise maxim in the mouth of a fool is as disastrous to all concerned as a thorn-stick in the hand of an irresponsible drunken man.

<sup>j</sup> 19<sup>3</sup> Lit., *ruins his way*.

<sup>k</sup> 19<sup>3</sup> Lit., *his heart rages*.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A FOOL

15	<sup>21</sup> Folly is a delight to one who lacks sense, But a man of insight is straightforward. <sup>1</sup>	Fond of his folly
10	<sup>23</sup> It is as sport to a fool to commit a crime, But so is wisdom to a man of sense.	
14	<sup>1</sup> A wise woman <sup>m</sup> builds up her household, But the foolish <sup>n</sup> with her own hand tears it down.	Improvi- dent
18	<sup>2</sup> A fool takes no pleasure in insight, But only in disclosing his mind.	Indis- creet
12	<sup>23</sup> A sensible man conceals his knowledge, But foolish minds proclaim their folly.	
14	<sup>33</sup> In an intelligent mind wisdom reposes; In the bosoms of fools it is made known. <sup>o</sup>	
12	<sup>16</sup> A fool's anger is known at once, But a sensible man ignores <sup>p</sup> an insult.	Uncon- trolled
14	<sup>9</sup> Fools mock at guilt, <sup>q</sup> But among the upright there is good will. <sup>r</sup>	Shameless
	<sup>24</sup> The crown of the wise is prudence, The diadem of fools is folly. <sup>s</sup>	
26	<sup>6</sup> He who sends a message by a fool Cuts off his own feet and drinks violence. <sup>t</sup>	Untrust- worthy
24	<sup>9</sup> The plan of the foolish <sup>u</sup> is sin, And the scoffer is abhorrent to men.	
29	<sup>9</sup> If a wise man has a lawsuit <sup>v</sup> with a fool, He trembles <sup>w</sup> and laughs and there is no rest.	Thoroughly perverse
27	<sup>22</sup> Though you should pound a fool in a mortar, <sup>x</sup> You will not remove his foolishness from him. <sup>y</sup>	Unalter- able
26	<sup>11</sup> Like a dog that returns to his vomit, A fool repeats his folly.	Disgust- ing
27	<sup>3</sup> A stone is heavy and sand weighty, But a fool's vexation is heavier than both.	Intoler- able
17	<sup>12</sup> Let a bear that has lost its cubs meet a man, But not a fool in his folly!	Danger- ous

<sup>1</sup> 15<sup>21</sup> Lit., *makes going straight*.

<sup>m</sup> 14<sup>1</sup> Slightly restoring the corrupt Heb.

<sup>n</sup> 14<sup>1</sup> Lit., *folly*.

<sup>o</sup> 14<sup>33</sup> If the text is correct, this line must be ironical.

<sup>p</sup> 12<sup>16</sup> Lit., *conceals, covers up*; i. e., he restrains his anger and avoids strife.

<sup>q</sup> 14<sup>9</sup> Following the Lat. Heb. is obviously corrupt. It might be rendered, *Guilt mocks fools*, but this does not yield a clear meaning.

<sup>r</sup> 14<sup>9</sup> I. e., either the sense of divine favor, or good-will among themselves. Cf. Luke 2<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> 14<sup>24</sup> Following the Gk. in emending the Heb., which reads:

*The crown of the wise is their riches,  
The folly of fools is folly.*

<sup>t</sup> 26<sup>6</sup> Inverting the two members of the couplet. The meaning of this line is obscure, probably as the result of corruption of Heb. The idea seems to be that he who trusts an important commission to a fool loses control of his interests and suffers loss.

<sup>u</sup> 24<sup>9</sup> Heb., *the plan (or thought) of folly*. The parallelism, however, supports the above reading.

<sup>v</sup> 29<sup>9</sup> The Heb. word has this technical meaning.

<sup>w</sup> 29<sup>9</sup> I. e., with excitement or anger. It is not clear whether it is the wise man who trembles and laughs or the fool. The construction gives the former interpretation but the sense the latter.

<sup>x</sup> 27<sup>22</sup> A scribe has apparently added, to explain the figure still further, *with a pestle in the midst of pounded grain*. This confuses the figure and destroys the poetic symmetry of the vs.

<sup>y</sup> 27<sup>22</sup> So Gk. Heb., *his foolishness will not depart*, but a slight emendation produces the same meaning as the Gk.

## MAN

### § 20. Hopeless Evils That Result from Folly, Pr. 3<sup>35</sup>, 11<sup>29</sup>, 10<sup>13</sup>, 26<sup>3</sup>, 10<sup>8</sup>, 18<sup>7</sup>, 21<sup>16</sup>

- Disgrace      **Pr. 3** <sup>35</sup>Wise men obtain honor,  
                     But disgrace is the lot of the fool.
- Serfdom      **11** <sup>29</sup>He who brings trouble to his own home shall inherit the wind,<sup>a</sup>  
                     And he who is foolish shall become slave to the wise.<sup>b</sup>
- Punish-  
ment      **10** <sup>13</sup>On the lips of the discerning wisdom is found,  
                     But the rod is for the back of him who is witless.
- Calamity      **26** <sup>3</sup>A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,  
                     And a rod for the back of a fool.<sup>c</sup>
- 10** <sup>8</sup>A wise<sup>d</sup> man accepts commands,  
                     But a foolish talker shall fall.
- 18** <sup>7</sup>A fool's mouth is his destruction,  
                     And his lips are a snare to him.
- Death      **21** <sup>16</sup>The man who strays from the way of wisdom  
                     Will rest in the assembly of the shades.<sup>e</sup>

### § 21. Aims of Education, Pr. 4<sup>1</sup>, 7, 15<sup>14</sup>, 14<sup>6</sup>, 13<sup>16</sup>, 10<sup>14</sup>, 18<sup>15</sup>, 17<sup>16</sup>, 23<sup>30</sup>

- To gain  
under-  
standing      **Pr. 4**      <sup>1</sup>Hear, O children, a father's instruction,  
                     And listen, that you may gain insight.  
                     <sup>7</sup>The beginning of wisdom:—Get wisdom,<sup>f</sup>  
                     And with all you have gotten get insight.
- Knowl-  
edge      **15** <sup>14</sup>An intelligent mind seeks knowledge,  
                     But the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.
- 14** <sup>6</sup>A scoffer seeks wisdom and finds none,  
                     But knowledge to an intelligent man is easy.
- 13** <sup>16</sup>A sensible man does everything wisely,<sup>g</sup>  
                     But a fool displays his folly.<sup>h</sup>
- 10** <sup>14</sup>Wise men hide their knowledge,  
                     But the mouth of a fool is impending destruction.<sup>i</sup>
- 18** <sup>15</sup>An intelligent mind acquires knowledge,  
                     And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
- Wisdom      **17** <sup>16</sup>Why is it a fool has a price in his hand  
                     To buy wisdom, when he has no mind?<sup>j</sup>

§ 20 From the Christian and modern educational point of view the wise put their teaching too often in negative rather than positive form. Here, as in § 19, they aimed to turn men from foolish conduct by pointing out its consequences. Their practical observations are very keen and true to human life in all ages.

<sup>a</sup> 11<sup>29</sup> *I. e.*, shall in time possess nothing.

<sup>b</sup> 11<sup>29</sup> *Lit.*, *wise of mind* (or *heart*).

<sup>c</sup> 26<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, a fool must be treated as a brute beast, for it is impossible to appeal to his reason.

<sup>d</sup> 10<sup>8</sup> *Lit.*, *wise in mind*.

<sup>e</sup> 21<sup>16</sup> *I. e.*, pay the penalty for his folly by death. For the Heb. idea of life after death, cf. Job 31<sup>8, 19</sup>, Is. 14<sup>18-20</sup>, Ezek. 26<sup>29</sup>, 32<sup>18-30</sup>.

§ 21 Cf. for a discussion of the sages' theory of education, *Introd.*, p. 10.

<sup>f</sup> 4<sup>7</sup> So Heb., literally rendered. The text is probably corrupt.

<sup>g</sup> 13<sup>16</sup> So Syr., *Lat.* Heb., *Every sensible man acts with knowledge*.

<sup>h</sup> 13<sup>16</sup> *I. e.*, makes a show of folly as a merchant spreads out his goods.

<sup>i</sup> 10<sup>14</sup> The meaning possibly is that the wise do not tell all that they know, but the fool is constantly bringing harm to himself and others by telling what should be kept secret.

<sup>j</sup> 17<sup>16</sup> *I. e.*, it is useless for a fool to seek to acquire wisdom by paying for it, for he does not have the ability to appreciate and apply it. Apparently in those days there were students who could pay the tuition fee but could not pass the examinations.

## AIMS OF EDUCATION

**23** <sup>23</sup>Buy the truth, and do not sell it,—  
Wisdom and training and insight.

§ 22. The Instructors, Pr. 3<sup>11, 12</sup>, 4<sup>1-4</sup>, 5<sup>b</sup>, 15<sup>12</sup>, 18<sup>4</sup>, 20<sup>5</sup>

**Pr. 3**     <sup>11</sup>My son, reject not the discipline of the Lord,  
            And do not spurn his reproof,  
            <sup>12</sup>For whom he loves<sup>k</sup> he reproves,  
            Even as a father<sup>l</sup> the son in whom he delights.

God the  
Great  
Teacher

**4**     <sup>1</sup>Hear, O children, a father's instruction,  
            And listen, that you may gain insight,  
            <sup>2</sup>Because I give you sound learning;  
            Do not forsake my teaching.

Parents

<sup>3</sup>When I was a son of tender age,  
            Dearly beloved by my father,<sup>m</sup>

<sup>4</sup>He used to teach me and say to me:  
            'Let your mind hold fast my words;  
            Keep my commands and live;

<sup>5b</sup>Do not forget nor turn away from my injunctions.'<sup>n</sup>

**15**     <sup>12A</sup>A scoffer does not like reproof;  
            He will not go to the wise.

Wise  
men

**18**     <sup>4</sup>The words of a man's mouth should be<sup>o</sup> as deep waters,  
            A gushing torrent, a wellspring of wisdom.

**20**     <sup>5</sup>Counsel in a man's mind is like deep water,  
            But a man of sense will draw it out.<sup>p</sup>

§ 23. Importance of Primary Education, Pr. 22<sup>6</sup>, 29<sup>17</sup>

**Pr. 22**     <sup>6</sup>Train a child in the way he should go;  
            When he is old he will not depart from it.<sup>a</sup>

Child  
training

**29**     <sup>17</sup>Correct your son, and he will bring you comfort,  
            And give you<sup>r</sup> exquisite delight.

§ 22 The wise recognized that life was one great school in which Jehovah was the master and the parents and the wise men were under obligation to attend to certain important parts in the education of the individual.

<sup>k</sup> 3<sup>12</sup> Omitting *the Lord*, which is clearly implied in the context and was probably added by a scribe. It destroys the metrical balance of the vs.

<sup>l</sup> 3<sup>12</sup> Or *and afflicts*, following the Gk. and the parallel passage in Job 5<sup>17, 18</sup>. The Heb., however, is strong and harmonious.

<sup>m</sup> 4<sup>3</sup> Following Toy in emending the Heb.

<sup>n</sup> 4<sup>5b</sup> Lit., *the words of my mouth*. Preceding this line the Heb. has the words, *Get wisdom, get insight*, but the Gk. does not have them and they are metrically superfluous.

<sup>o</sup> 18<sup>4</sup> Supplying the verb required to bring out the idea. The wise would not assert that all men were thus gifted with wisdom.

<sup>p</sup> 20<sup>5</sup> This proverb is elucidated by the preceding. *Counsel* in this case may also mean the secret purposes which a man of insight and sagacity is able to draw out.

§ 23 The central thought of these proverbs is reflected also in many others not classified under this head.

<sup>a</sup> 22<sup>6</sup> This proverb embodies one of the fundamental principles of modern education. It was inspired by practical observation and experience and is the watchword of the modern religious education movement.

<sup>r</sup> 29<sup>17</sup> Lit., *to your soul*; but this idiom is more exactly rendered as above.



# MAN

§ 24. Discipline, Pr. 29<sup>15</sup>, 27<sup>5</sup>, 13<sup>24</sup>, 19<sup>18</sup>, 23<sup>13, 14</sup>, 12<sup>1</sup>, 10<sup>17</sup>, 15<sup>10</sup>, 19<sup>16</sup>, 29<sup>1</sup>, 15<sup>5</sup>, 28<sup>4</sup>,  
15<sup>32</sup>, 17<sup>10</sup>, 25<sup>12</sup>

Necessary  
to edu-  
cation

**Pr. 29** <sup>15</sup>The rod and correction give wisdom,  
But a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

**27** <sup>5</sup>Better is open rebuke  
Than love that is hidden.<sup>5</sup>

**13** <sup>24</sup>He who spares his rod hates his son,  
But he who loves him punishes<sup>t</sup> him.

**19** <sup>18</sup>Punish<sup>v</sup> your son while yet there is still hope;  
Set not your heart on his destruction.

**23** <sup>13</sup>Withhold not discipline from the child;  
If you beat him with the rod, he will not die.

<sup>14</sup>You must beat him with the rod,  
And so deliver him from Sheol.<sup>v</sup>

**12** <sup>1</sup>He who loves knowledge loves correction,<sup>w</sup>  
But he who hates reproof is stupid.

**10** <sup>17</sup>He who heeds correction has the assurance of life,  
But he who disregards reproof is in danger of going astray.

**15** <sup>10</sup>There is severe correction for one who leaves the path;  
He who hates reproof will die.

**19** <sup>16</sup>One who keeps the commandment<sup>x</sup> keeps his life;  
He who despises the word<sup>v</sup> will die.

**29** <sup>1</sup>He who, though often reproved, persists in his course<sup>a</sup>  
Shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.

**15** <sup>5</sup>A fool despises his father's correction,  
But he who regards reproof acts prudently.

**28** <sup>4</sup>Those who forsake the teaching<sup>a</sup> commend the wicked,  
But those who observe the teaching contend against them.

**15** <sup>32</sup>He who rejects correction despises his own self,  
But he who listens to reproof gains understanding.

**17** <sup>10</sup>A rebuke enters deeper into an intelligent man  
Than a hundred stripes into a fool.

**25** <sup>12</sup>As an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold,  
So is a wise reprover on a responsive ear.

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§ 24 Well aware that discipline was essential at certain stages in the training of a child, the sages properly threw the responsibility on the parents. Modern education suggests less crude and more effective forms of discipline, but the principle is still practical.

<sup>a</sup> 27<sup>5</sup> This proverb refers to the relations of friends as well as of parents and children.

<sup>t</sup> 13<sup>24</sup> Lit., *seeks him early with discipline*, but this merely indicates earnestness, not literally rising early for the sake of administering punishment.

<sup>v</sup> 19<sup>18</sup> I. e., discipline, if need be, by severe measures.

<sup>w</sup> 23<sup>13, 14</sup> These two vss. are a unit.

<sup>x</sup> 12<sup>1</sup> Or *He who loves correction loves knowledge*.

<sup>a</sup> 19<sup>16</sup> I. e., the precepts of the priests and sages.

<sup>v</sup> 19<sup>16</sup> Correcting the Heb. by the analogy of 13<sup>13</sup>. Heb., *despises his ways*; but this makes no sense.

<sup>a</sup> 29<sup>1</sup> Lit., *hardens his neck*.

<sup>a</sup> 28<sup>4</sup> *Torah* is probably here, as elsewhere in Pr., to be translated, not *law* in the technical meaning of a body of legal statutes, but *teaching*, referring especially to the teachings of the wise. The references to the wicked confirm this conclusion.

## THE RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE

§ 25. Importance of the Receptive Attitude, Pr. 12<sup>15</sup>, 28<sup>13</sup>, 18<sup>1</sup>, 9<sup>7-9</sup>, 19<sup>27</sup>, 23<sup>12</sup>, 19<sup>20</sup>, 4<sup>13</sup>

- Pr. 12** <sup>15</sup>A fool's conduct seems right in his sight,  
But a wise man listens to counsel.
- 28** <sup>13</sup>He who hides his transgressions will not prosper,  
But he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
- 18** <sup>1</sup>He seeks desire who withdraws himself,  
And against sound wisdom he rages.<sup>b</sup>
- 9** <sup>7</sup>He who corrects a scoffer gets insult,  
And he who reproves a wicked man gets disgrace.  
<sup>8</sup>Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate you;  
Reprove a wise man and he will love you.  
<sup>9</sup>Give instruction to a wise man and he will be wiser;  
Teach a righteous man and he will gain more learning.
- 19** <sup>27</sup>Cease, my son, to hate<sup>c</sup> instruction,  
To err from the words of knowledge.
- 23** <sup>12</sup>Apply your mind to instruction,  
And your ears to words of knowledge.
- 19** <sup>20</sup>Listen to counsel and receive instruction,  
That you may be wise in your later life.
- 4** <sup>13</sup>Hold fast instruction, let it not go;  
Keep it, for it is your life.

The chief distinction between a fool and a wise man is his attitude toward counsel

The right attitude of a disciple

§ 26. Value of Education, Pr. 1<sup>8, 9</sup>, 24<sup>13, 14</sup>, 16<sup>22</sup>, 19<sup>8</sup>, 16<sup>16</sup>, 28<sup>11</sup>, 15<sup>2, 7</sup>, 16<sup>23</sup>, 13<sup>15</sup>, 21<sup>22</sup>, 20<sup>18</sup>, 24<sup>5, 6</sup>, 21<sup>20</sup>, 24<sup>3, 4</sup>, 13<sup>14</sup>, 4<sup>10-12</sup>

- Pr. 1** <sup>8</sup>My son, hear the instruction of your father,  
And forsake not the teaching of your mother;  
<sup>9</sup>They shall be a chaplet of beauty for your head,  
And a necklace about your neck.
- 24** <sup>13</sup>Eat honey, my son, for it is good,  
And honeycomb is sweet to your taste.  
<sup>14</sup>So know wisdom to be to your soul:  
If you find it, your hope shall not be cut off.<sup>d</sup>
- 16** <sup>22</sup>Understanding is a wellspring of life to its possessor,  
But folly is the chastisement of fools.<sup>e</sup>

In general

§ 25 This section formulates one of the chief aims of the wise, which was to develop in men a receptive attitude. They realized that all things were open to him who would heed instruction, but that the man who would not listen closed all doors against his own development.

<sup>b</sup> 18<sup>1</sup> This proverb is very obscure. Gk., Lat. differ materially from Heb., and many emendations and interpretations have been suggested, but none is satisfactory. Apparently a wilful, unsocial nature is indicated.

<sup>c</sup> 19<sup>27</sup> Heb., *hear*. Another obscure proverb. Toy changes to read, *He who ceases to listen to instruction will wander from the words of knowledge*. Probably the original had the similar sounding Heb. verb *to hate* instead of the doubtful *to hear*, which is followed in most translations.

§ 26 This theme was a favorite one with the sages, who taught most emphatically that *knowledge is power*.

<sup>d</sup> 24<sup>14</sup> It is not clear whether this vs. originally ended with *find it* or as above. In Heb. a scribe has introduced from 23<sup>18</sup>, *and there is an end*, which makes no sense here. Possibly he added *your hope shall not be cut off* from the same source, but more probably the presence of these words led him by association to insert the preceding awkward clause.

<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>22</sup> I. e., folly brings its punishment, just as insight, on the other hand, gives life to its possessor.

# MAN

Better  
than  
riches

Guide to  
the use  
of wise  
words

Secures  
favor

Brings  
victory

A source  
of wealth

Insures a  
long and  
peaceful  
life

- 19 <sup>a</sup>He who gets intelligence is a friend to himself;<sup>f</sup>  
He who keeps understanding shall find good.<sup>g</sup>
- 16 <sup>16</sup>How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!<sup>h</sup>  
To get insight is rather to be chosen than silver.
- 28 <sup>11</sup>The rich man is wise in his own eyes,  
But an intelligent poor man will search him out.<sup>i</sup>
- 15 <sup>2</sup>The tongues of the wise dispense<sup>j</sup> knowledge,  
But the mouths of fools pour out folly.  
<sup>7</sup>The lips of the wise disperse<sup>k</sup> knowledge,  
But the fool<sup>l</sup> does not comprehend.<sup>m</sup>
- 16 <sup>23</sup>The mind of the wise guides his mouth,  
And adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- 13 <sup>15</sup>Good sense is rewarded with favor,  
But the conduct of the faithless destroys them.<sup>n</sup>
- 21 <sup>22</sup>A wise man scales the city of the mighty,  
And brings down the stronghold in which it trusted.<sup>o</sup>
- 20 <sup>18</sup>Establish<sup>p</sup> your plans by counsel,  
And make war not without guidance.
- 24 <sup>5</sup>A wise man is better than a strong man,  
And a man who has knowledge than he who has strength.<sup>q</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>For by wise guidance you conduct war,<sup>r</sup>  
And in the multitude of counsellors<sup>s</sup> there is safety.
- 21 <sup>20</sup>There is a precious treasure<sup>t</sup> in the dwelling of the wise,  
But a foolish man swallows it up.
- 24 <sup>3</sup>By wisdom a house is built,  
By understanding it is established,  
<sup>4</sup>And by knowledge the chambers are filled  
With all precious and pleasing stores.<sup>u</sup>
- 13 <sup>14</sup>The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,  
That a man may avoid<sup>v</sup> the snares of death.

<sup>f</sup> 19<sup>a</sup> Lit., *He who gets mind is one who loves his soul* (or *self*).

<sup>g</sup> 19<sup>a</sup> *I. e.*, enjoy the fulness of life.

<sup>h</sup> 16<sup>16</sup> Possibly the irregular *how* is a late addition, and the first line, like the second, was a simple statement, *To get wisdom is better than gold*.

<sup>i</sup> 28<sup>11</sup> Riches and wisdom do not always go together. The sage's sympathies are with the poor, whose poverty was a spur to the development of their wits.

<sup>j</sup> 15<sup>2</sup> Lit., *let fall*, slightly correcting the Heb., which reads, *make good*.

<sup>k</sup> 15<sup>7</sup> Since this word is ordinarily "used of destructive dispersion," Toy, by changing one letter of the Heb., reads *preserve*.

<sup>l</sup> 15<sup>7</sup> Lit., *the mind of fools*.

<sup>m</sup> 15<sup>7</sup> With Toy slightly revising the Heb. as the context suggests.

<sup>n</sup> 13<sup>15</sup> Heb., *is enduring*, but this is just the opposite of what the sages taught. The current translation, *is rugged* (or *hard*), is unjustified. It is not the only instance of a mistranslation which has become a proverb. Again the Gk. aids in correcting a slight error of the Heb. due to a similarity of sound.

<sup>o</sup> 21<sup>22</sup> Lit., *the strength of its confidence*.

<sup>p</sup> 20<sup>18</sup> Following Toy in reading the verb as imperative rather than declarative.

<sup>q</sup> 24<sup>5</sup> Following the Gk., Syr., and Targ. in reconstructing the Heb.

<sup>r</sup> 24<sup>6</sup> Following the Gk. and Syr. in omitting, *for yourself*.

<sup>s</sup> 24<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, in taking wise and varied counsel.

<sup>t</sup> 21<sup>20</sup> Heb., but not Gk., adds, *and oil*; but this is probably a later scribal gloss.

<sup>u</sup> 24<sup>4</sup> Lit., *wealth*, but the sage evidently has in mind the costly possessions with which a house was furnished.

<sup>v</sup> 13<sup>14</sup> Lit., *to avoid*. Cf. 14<sup>27</sup>.

## VALUE OF EDUCATION

- 4 <sup>10</sup>Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,  
 And the years of your life shall be many.  
<sup>11</sup>I teach you the way of wisdom,  
 I lead you in the paths of uprightness.  
<sup>12</sup>When you walk you<sup>w</sup> will not be impeded,  
 And if you run, you will not stumble.

### C

#### MAN IN HIS DOMESTIC RELATIONS

- § 27. Parents and Children, Pr. 23<sup>22</sup>, 19<sup>26</sup>, 20<sup>20</sup>, 28<sup>24</sup>, 30<sup>17</sup>, 13<sup>1</sup>, 28<sup>7</sup>, 15<sup>20</sup>, 17<sup>26</sup>, <sup>21</sup>,  
 23<sup>24</sup>, 10<sup>1</sup>, 23<sup>25</sup>, 27<sup>11</sup>, 13<sup>22</sup>, 17<sup>6</sup>, 20<sup>7</sup>, 18<sup>19</sup>

- Pr. 23 <sup>22</sup>Listen to your father who begat you,  
 And despise not your mother when she is old.<sup>a</sup>  
 19 <sup>26</sup>He who maltreats his father and chases away his mother  
 Is a son who acts shamefully and disgracefully.  
 20 <sup>20</sup>He who curses his father or mother,<sup>b</sup>  
 His lamp shall go out in the blackest of darkness.<sup>c</sup>  
 28 <sup>24</sup>He who robs his father or mother,  
 Saying, 'There is no wrong in it,'<sup>d</sup>  
 Is like<sup>e</sup> him who is a destroyer.  
 30 <sup>17</sup>The eye that mocks a father  
 And despises the old age<sup>f</sup> of his mother  
 The ravens of the valley shall pick out,  
 And the vultures<sup>g</sup> shall eat it.  
 13 <sup>1</sup>A wise son loves<sup>h</sup> instruction,  
 But a scoffer will not listen to a rebuke.  
 28 <sup>7</sup>He who obeys instruction is an intelligent son,  
 But he who makes friends of profligates brings disgrace on his  
 father.  
 15 <sup>20</sup>A wise son makes a glad father,  
 But a foolish son<sup>i</sup> despises his mother.

Filial  
 obliga-  
 tions

What  
 children  
 confer  
 upon  
 parents

<sup>w</sup> 4<sup>12</sup> Heb., *your step*.

§ 27 The glimpses here given of the domestic life of the Hebrews are illuminating. The mother of children stands almost on an equality with the husband. Bad children were evidently not unknown. Loyalty to parents is made by the sages one of the strongest motives for right doing. In this they show their wisdom, for it is often the only force that will hold the young from doing wrong. It appeals to the chivalrous note and to the feeling of love and gratitude that is strong within the heart of the normal youth. In the same way the wise emphasize the responsibility of parents to children, thus anticipating what is often held to be a very modern principle.

<sup>a</sup> 23<sup>22</sup> Cf. the parallel in 30<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> 20<sup>20</sup> Cf. the older law, Ex. 21<sup>17</sup>, Lev. 20<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> 20<sup>20</sup> Lit., *in the pupil of darkness*. I. e., his life shall be extinguished.

<sup>d</sup> 28<sup>24</sup> This line destroys the symmetry of the couplet and may be the explanation of a later scribe. The reference is probably to robbery under the guise of law by depriving parents of their property. Cf. Mk. 7<sup>11, 12</sup>, where Jesus develops the same teaching.

<sup>e</sup> 28<sup>24</sup> Lit., *a companion to*; i. e., places himself in the same class with.

<sup>f</sup> 30<sup>17</sup> So Gk. and a revision of the Heb., which is clearly corrupt. The current translation, *to obey*, is very doubtful. Cf. the parallel to the Gk. in 23<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> 30<sup>17</sup> Lit., *sons of vultures*, i. e., members of the vulture family. Cf. *daughters of men* for women.

<sup>h</sup> 13<sup>1</sup> Correcting the Heb. by the analogy of 12<sup>1</sup> and the evidence of the parallelism.

<sup>i</sup> 15<sup>20</sup> So Gk. and some Heb. MSS.

# MAN

- 17 <sup>25</sup>A foolish son is a grief to his father  
And brings bitterness to her who bore him.  
<sup>21</sup>He who begets a stupid son does it to his sorrow,  
And the father of a fool has no joy.
- 23 <sup>24</sup>The father of a righteous man greatly rejoices,  
And he who begets a wise son<sup>1</sup> has joy.
- 10 <sup>1</sup>A wise son makes a glad father,  
But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.
- 23 <sup>25</sup>Let your father<sup>k</sup> be filled with joy,  
And let her who bore you rejoice.
- 27 <sup>11</sup>Be wise, my son, and make glad my heart,  
That I may answer the one who reproaches me.
- 13 <sup>22</sup>A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,  
But the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the righteous.
- 17 <sup>6</sup>Children's children are the crown of old men,  
And the glory of children is their father's.
- 20 <sup>7</sup>A righteous man who lives a blameless life,—  
Blessed are his children after him!
- 18 <sup>19</sup>Brother helped by brother is like a city firm and high,  
And strong as a well-founded palace.<sup>1</sup>

§ 28. Wives, Pr. 19<sup>13</sup>, 27<sup>15</sup>, <sup>16</sup>, 21<sup>9</sup>, <sup>19</sup>, 12<sup>4</sup>, 19<sup>14</sup>, 18<sup>22</sup>

- Pr. 19 <sup>13</sup>A foolish son is ruin to his father,  
And the quarrelling of a wife is a continual dripping.
- 27 <sup>15</sup>A continual dripping on a rainy day  
And a quarrelsome woman are alike;  
<sup>16</sup>He who would restrain<sup>m</sup> her restrains the wind,  
And his hand comes in contact with oil.
- 21 <sup>9</sup>It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop,  
Than with a quarrelsome woman in a large house.<sup>n</sup>
- <sup>19</sup>It is better to dwell in a wilderness,  
Than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.
- 12 <sup>4</sup>A good wife<sup>o</sup> is a crown to her husband,  
But a shameless one is as rottenness in his bones.
- 19 <sup>14</sup>Houses and riches are an inheritance,<sup>p</sup>  
But a prudent wife comes from the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> 23<sup>24</sup> Possibly the original read, *she who bore him*, making the parallelism complete; cf. vs. 2, 10<sup>1</sup>, and 17<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>k</sup> 23<sup>25</sup> Heb. adds, *and your mother*, but this destroys the parallelism.

<sup>1</sup> 18<sup>19</sup> So Gk. Heb. is unintelligible.

§ 28 The possibilities of the marriage relation for weal or woe are here forcibly set forth and with a practical purpose. If they were oftener held up before the young, many tragedies would be averted.

<sup>m</sup> 27<sup>16</sup> So Lat. The meaning seems to be, it is as easy to hold (Heb. *hide*) the wind, or to hold oil in one's hands, as to stop a quarrelsome woman.

<sup>n</sup> 21<sup>9</sup> This proverb is repeated in 25<sup>24</sup>. The reading of the Heb. followed above is obtained by transposing two letters.

<sup>o</sup> 12<sup>4</sup> The Heb. means, *a woman of strength*. This strength may be physical, mental, or moral, or may include general ability. The comparison lays the emphasis primarily on moral character.

<sup>p</sup> 19<sup>14</sup> Heb. adds, *of (i. e., from) fathers*.

What  
parents  
confer  
upon  
children

Brotherly  
co-opera-  
tion

The  
source of  
their  
husbands'  
weal or  
woe

Value of  
a good  
wife



## WIVES

- 18 <sup>22</sup>If one finds a wife, he finds a good thing,  
And obtains favor from the Lord.

### § 29. The Ideal Wife, Pr. 31<sup>10-31</sup>

#### Pr. 31

- <sup>10</sup>A good wife who can find?

She is worth far more than corals.

- <sup>11</sup>Her husband<sup>a</sup> trusts her completely,  
And has<sup>r</sup> no lack of gain.

- <sup>12</sup>She does him good and not harm  
All the days of her life.

Faithful  
to her  
husband's  
interests

- <sup>13</sup>She procures wool and flax,  
And works willingly with her hands.<sup>o</sup>

- <sup>14</sup>She is like the ships of the merchant,  
She brings her food from afar.

Provides  
well for  
her  
family

- <sup>15</sup>She rises also while yet it is night,  
And gives out food<sup>t</sup> to her household.<sup>u</sup>

- <sup>16</sup>She examines a field and buys it,  
With her earnings she plants a vineyard.

Sagacious  
in man-  
aging her  
business

- <sup>17</sup>She girds herself with might,  
And develops strength in her arms.

- <sup>18</sup>She perceives<sup>v</sup> that her profit is good;  
Her lamp goes not out at night.

- <sup>19</sup>She lays her hands on the distaff,  
Her hands take hold of the spindle.

Indus-  
trious  
and  
charita-  
ble

- <sup>20</sup>She bestows her goods on<sup>w</sup> the poor,  
Extends her hands to the needy.

- <sup>21</sup>She fears not snow for her household,  
For all her household is clothed in scarlet.

Clothes  
her  
family  
well

- <sup>22</sup>Coverlets she makes for herself,  
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

- <sup>23</sup>Her husband is known in the council,<sup>x</sup>  
When he sits among the elders of the land.

§ 29 While the sages' ideal of the perfect wife is distinctly Oriental and lacks the elements of full equality and companionship that are so highly appreciated in the modern Occident, it places the emphasis on those home qualities that make for the peace and strength of the home life. The Hebrew wife also possessed much more independence than her Oriental sisters to-day. As in the modern East, she did most of the work outside as well as within the home, while her husband was free to devote himself to public and social functions. This poem is the one example of the acrostic or alphabetical poem in the O.T. Wisdom Literature.

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>11</sup> Lit., *her husband's mind*.

<sup>r</sup> 31<sup>11</sup> So Lat. Gk., *She has*. Heb., lit., *spoil is not lacking*.

<sup>o</sup> 31<sup>12</sup> Lit., *With the delight of her hands*. Possibly, as Toy urges (Pr. 554), the Heb. idiom means, *as she will*.

<sup>u</sup> 31<sup>15</sup> Lit., *prey*; i. e., what she has received.

<sup>v</sup> 31<sup>18</sup> Heb. adds a third line, *And their portion to her maids*, but this is not supported by the rigidly regular parallelism of this acrostic poem and is evidently a scribal expansion.

<sup>t</sup> 31<sup>18</sup> Lit., *tastes*; i. e., learns by experience.

<sup>w</sup> 31<sup>20</sup> Lit., *stretches out her hand to*.

<sup>x</sup> 31<sup>23</sup> Lit., *gates*. The context suggests that it is her husband's clothing that gives him distinction in the council at the city gate. The greater cause, however, is the ability of his wife.

## MAN

<sup>24</sup>She makes linen cloth and sells it,  
Girdles she delivers to the merchant.

Wise and  
kind

<sup>25</sup>Strength and honor are her clothing,  
She laughs at the time to come.

<sup>26</sup>What she says is full of wisdom,<sup>v</sup>  
And on her tongue is kindly instruction.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>27</sup>She attends to the interests of her household,  
Nor eats the bread of idleness.

<sup>28</sup>Her children rise up and bless her,  
And her husband praises her, saying:

<sup>29</sup>'Many women<sup>a</sup> have done well,  
But you excel them all.'

<sup>30</sup>Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain;  
A woman of intelligence<sup>b</sup> will have praise.

<sup>31</sup>Give her credit for the work of her hands;  
And let her works praise her in the gates.<sup>c</sup>

Praised  
by her  
children  
and  
husband

Worthy  
of honor

### § 30. A Husband's Duty to His Wife, Pr. 5<sup>15-20</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Drink waters from your own cistern,  
And running water from your own well.

<sup>16</sup>Should your springs be scattered abroad,  
And your rivers of water in the street?<sup>d</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Let them be for yourself alone,  
And not for strangers with you.

<sup>18</sup>Let your fountain be blessed,  
And rejoice in the wife of your youth.

<sup>19</sup>Let<sup>e</sup> her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
And be ever ravished with her love.

<sup>20</sup>For why should you, my son, be ravished with a stranger  
And embrace the bosom of another woman?

### § 31. Master and Servant, Pr. 29<sup>21, 19, 19<sup>10</sup>, 30<sup>10</sup>, 17<sup>2</sup></sup>

**Pr. 29** <sup>21</sup>He who brings up his servant in luxury from a child<sup>f</sup>

Fidelity

The  
spoiled  
servant

<sup>v</sup> 31<sup>20</sup> Lit., *Her mouth she opens with wisdom.*

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>20</sup> Lit., *teaching of kindness.*

<sup>b</sup> 31<sup>20</sup> Lit., *daughters; i. e., of men.*

<sup>c</sup> 31<sup>20</sup> So Gk. This is also in harmony with the context. Heb., *a woman who fears the Lord*, is clearly the addition of a pious scribe.

<sup>d</sup> 31<sup>18</sup> Lit., *Give her the fruit of her hands.*

§ 30 The pictures given of Hebrew husbands are, on the whole, less attractive than those of their wives. The sages emphasized, however, the necessity of marital fidelity in husband as well as wife, although ancient, like modern, society failed to punish incontinence in the man as it did in the woman.

<sup>e</sup> 51<sup>6</sup> The emphasis in these two verses is on conjugal fidelity. As in Is. 36<sup>15</sup>, 51<sup>1</sup>, the cistern represents the pleasures of a man's home. Cf. Sg. of Sgs. 4<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> 51<sup>9</sup> Apparently a scribe, commenting on 1<sup>8</sup>, has inserted at the beginning of 1<sup>9</sup> the exclamation, *Lovely hind and charming mountain goat*. It has no parallel and interrupts the sequence of thought.

§ 31 The household slave was recognized as a member of the Heb. family and treated almost as a child of the master. This fact is fully appreciated by the sages, whose utterances upon this theme are more of the nature of observations than precepts.

<sup>1</sup> 29<sup>21</sup> Gk., *He who from a child lives luxuriously will be a servant*. Possibly this is the original reading.

## MASTER AND SERVANT

- Will in the end bring trouble upon himself.<sup>g</sup>
- <sup>19</sup> A servant will not be corrected by words,<sup>h</sup>  
For though he understand he will not respond.
- 19** <sup>10</sup> That a fool should have luxury is not desirable,  
Much less that a servant should rule over princes.
- 30** <sup>10</sup> Defame not a servant to his master,  
Lest he curse you, and you be held guilty.
- 17** <sup>2</sup> A wise servant shall rule over a son who acts shamefully,  
And shall share the inheritance among brothers.

A servant as a ruler

Let a stranger not intermeddle

The reward of a faithful servant

### D

#### MAN IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS

##### § 32. Social Calls, Pr. 25<sup>17</sup>

- Pr. 25** <sup>17</sup> Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house,  
Lest he become weary of you and hate you.

##### § 33. Friendship, Pr. 27<sup>10</sup>, 22<sup>24, 25</sup>, 18<sup>24</sup>, 17<sup>17</sup>, 27<sup>9, 6</sup>

- Pr. 27** <sup>10</sup> Your friend, and your father's friend, forsake not;<sup>a</sup>  
Better is a neighbor near at hand than a brother far away.
- 22** <sup>24</sup> Make no friendship with a man given to anger,  
And go not with a wrathful man,<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>25</sup> Lest you learn his ways  
And involve yourself in trouble.<sup>c</sup>
- 18** <sup>24</sup> There are some friends<sup>d</sup> who are hurtful,<sup>e</sup>  
And there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- 17** <sup>17</sup> A friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.<sup>f</sup>
- 27** <sup>9</sup> Oil and perfume rejoice the heart,  
So does sweet friendship by sincere counsel.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 29<sup>21</sup> So Gk. The meaning of the Heb. is unknown. Possibly it should read, *In the end he will become refractory.*

<sup>b</sup> 29<sup>19</sup> Servants, like children, must be disciplined by more than mere words.

**Man in His Social Relations.**—The sages did not stop to discuss the ultimate basis of right and wrong. The principles enunciated by the earlier prophets, their observations of life, and their own intuitions told them that certain acts were wrong and others right, and so they taught. Their authority was that of conviction based on keen observation and deep experience.

§ 32 In the Orient social calls are made almost entirely by the men. The burden of the labor in the household and in the field falls upon the women, leaving them little time for social life, while the men appear to have so much leisure that the advice of the sage is still to the point.

§ 33 The sages held up a high ideal of friendship. They realized that adversity was the true test of friendship and that friendly criticism was far more valuable than flattery.

<sup>a</sup> 27<sup>10</sup> The fact that in the Heb. this proverb has three lines suggests the work of a scribe. The third line is the complement of the first, while the second, *And go not to your brother's house in the day of your distress*, is contrary to 17<sup>17</sup>, *A brother is born for adversity*, and to ordinary human experience. There is every reason, therefore, for regarding it as secondary.

<sup>b</sup> 22<sup>24</sup> This is one of the proverbs derived from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15).

<sup>c</sup> 22<sup>25</sup> Lit., *get a snare for yourself.*

<sup>d</sup> 18<sup>24</sup> So Syr., Targ., certain Gk. MSS., and a slightly revised Heb. text.

<sup>e</sup> 18<sup>24</sup> Lit., *companions.* Toy (Pr. 365) reads, *who only seek society.* The reading adopted above is supported not only by the context but also by the Syr., Targ., Lat., and certain Gk. MSS. Current translation, *to his own destruction.*

<sup>f</sup> 17<sup>17</sup> In time of adversity a man turns to his kinsmen.

<sup>g</sup> 27<sup>9</sup> Lit., *and the sweetness of his friend from counsel of soul.* Lat., inverting the order of the words, *and the soul is sweetened by the good counsels of a friend.*

## MAN

<sup>6</sup>Sincere are the wounds of a friend,  
But profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

§ 34. Rich and Poor, Pr. 29<sup>13</sup>, 28<sup>3</sup>, 13<sup>23</sup>, 29<sup>7</sup>, 21<sup>13</sup>, 28<sup>27</sup>, 14<sup>21</sup>, 22<sup>9</sup>

The two  
classes

**Pr. 29** <sup>13</sup>The poor man and the oppressor meet together,  
The Lord gives light to the eyes of both.

Oppres-  
sion of  
the poor

**28** <sup>3</sup>A wicked man<sup>b</sup> who oppresses the poor  
Is like a rain that sweeps away and gives no bread.

**13** <sup>23</sup>The fallow land of the poor yields abundance of food,  
But many a man is destroyed through injustice.<sup>1</sup>

Obliga-  
tions to  
the poor

**29** <sup>7</sup>A righteous man considers the cause of the poor;  
A wicked man does not understand knowledge.

**21** <sup>13</sup>He who closes his ears to the cry of the poor,  
He also shall call and not be answered.

**28** <sup>27</sup>He who gives to the poor will not lack,  
But he who hides his eyes will have many a curse.

**14** <sup>31</sup>He who oppresses the poor reviles his Maker,  
But he who has pity on the needy honors him.

**22** <sup>9</sup>He who has a bountiful eye will be blessed,  
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

## E

### MAN IN HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

§ 35. Rules for Different Occupations, Pr. 27<sup>23-27</sup>

Pastoral

**Pr. 27** <sup>23</sup>Be diligent to know the state of your flocks,  
Give careful attention to your herds,

<sup>24</sup>For riches are not forever;  
And does wealth<sup>a</sup> endure to all generations?

<sup>25</sup>The hay is removed, the aftergrowth appears,  
And the grass of the mountains is gathered in.

<sup>26</sup>The lambs will supply you with clothing  
And the goats pay the price of the field,

<sup>27</sup>And there will be goats' milk enough for your food<sup>b</sup>  
And maintenance for your maidens.

§ 34 While lacking in the social passion of the prophets, the sages hold substantially the prophetic view of the relations between rich and poor. Their attitude, especially in its emphasis on charity, was carried over into the teaching of the later rabbis.

<sup>b</sup> 28<sup>3</sup> Heb., *a needy man*, but the idea of the needy oppressing the poor is very strange, and the above reading requires only a slight change in the Heb. Gk., *a virile man in wickedness*.

<sup>1</sup> 13<sup>23</sup> The meaning of this proverb is exceedingly doubtful. Possibly it teaches that, although the poor are allowed to share in the products of the fallow land, especially during the seventh year of rest (cf. Vol. IV, § 223), they frequently fall a prey to the oppression and legalized injustice that the prophets denounced.

**Man in His Economic Relations.**—The economic order which the sages contemplated was, of course, a very simple one, but their observations are still valuable.

§ 35 The homely practical interest of the sages is strikingly illustrated by these verses.

<sup>a</sup> 27<sup>24</sup> Emending the Heb. in accordance with the context.

<sup>b</sup> 27<sup>27</sup> Heb. adds, *for the food of your household*, probably an alternative reading included here by conflation of varying MSS.

## LABOR AND LAZINESS

§ 36. Labor and Laziness, Pr. 16<sup>26</sup>, 27<sup>18</sup>, 22<sup>22</sup>, 12<sup>27</sup>, 24, 22<sup>13</sup>, 26<sup>14-16</sup>, 20<sup>4</sup>, 19<sup>15</sup>, 15<sup>19</sup>, 21<sup>25</sup>, 18<sup>9</sup>, 14<sup>4</sup>, 10<sup>5</sup>, 24<sup>27</sup>, 20<sup>14</sup>, 22<sup>7</sup>

- Pr. 16**    26 The appetite of the laborer labors for him,  
                     For his hunger impels him to work.
- 27    18 The keeper of the fig tree shall eat its fruit,  
                     And he who waits on his master shall be honored.
- 22    29 If you see a man skilled in his business,  
                     He shall stand in the presence of kings,  
                     And not in the presence of obscure men.<sup>c</sup>
- 12    27 The slothful man does not stir up his game,  
                     But a diligent man possesses wealth.<sup>d</sup>  
                     24 The hand of the diligent will rule,  
                     But sloth will be enslaved.
- 22    13 The sluggard says, 'A lion is outside!  
                     I shall be killed in the streets!'
- 26    14 As the door turns on its hinges,  
                     So the lazy man turns on his bed.  
                     15 He dips his hand in the dish,  
                     But does not<sup>e</sup> bring it to his mouth!  
                     16 The lazy man is wiser in his own opinion  
                     Than seven who can answer intelligently.
- 20    4 The lazy man will not plough in the fall;  
                     He expects a harvest,<sup>f</sup> but has none.
- 19    15 Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep,  
                     And the idle soul shall hunger.
- 15    19 The way of the lazy is hedged in with thorns,  
                     But the path of the diligent is a well-built highway.
- 21    25 The desire of the lazy man kills him,  
                     For his hands refuse to work.
- 18    9 He also who is slack in his work  
                     Is a brother to one who destroys.
- 14    4 Where there are no oxen, the crib is clean,<sup>g</sup>  
                     But large crops depend on the strength of the ox.
- 10    5 He who gathers in summer acts sensibly,<sup>h</sup>  
                     He who sleeps in harvest behaves disgracefully.

An in-  
centive  
to labor

The re-  
ward of  
diligence

Charac-  
teristics  
of a lazy  
man

The evils  
that re-  
sult from  
laziness

Agricul-  
tural  
maxims

§ 36 Industry is an important element in the ideal of character held up by the wise.

<sup>c</sup> 22<sup>20</sup> This is one of the proverbs derived from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Intro.*, p. 15).

<sup>d</sup> 12<sup>27</sup> Transposing two words and inserting a preposition as suggested by Toy (Pr. 259).

The current translations are unsatisfactory and not supported by the Heb.

<sup>e</sup> 26<sup>15</sup> Lit., it tires him to.

<sup>f</sup> 20<sup>4</sup> Lit., he asks (or seeks) in the harvest. Possibly we should translate, *In harvest time he will beg, but will get nothing.*

<sup>g</sup> 14<sup>4</sup> The Heb. word used here ordinarily refers to moral purity. A slight revision of the Heb. gives the meaning, *there is no corn*. In any case the proverb simply emphasizes the importance of the ox in tilling the soil.

<sup>h</sup> 10<sup>5</sup> Lit., is a wise son; i. e., member of the family or clan. The second member also reads, lit., is a son who acts shamefully.



# MAN

- 24 <sup>27</sup>Set in order your work without,  
Prepare for your work in the field,  
And after that build your house.<sup>i</sup>
- 20 <sup>14</sup>'Bad, bad,' says the buyer,  
But when he has gone away, he boasts.
- 22 <sup>7</sup>The rich rules over the poor,  
And the borrower is servant to the lender.

Commer-  
cial  
maxims

§ 37. Poverty, Pr. 23<sup>20</sup>, <sup>21</sup>, 28<sup>13</sup>, 22<sup>16</sup>, 13<sup>18</sup>, 6<sup>6-11</sup>, 24<sup>30-34</sup>, 10<sup>15</sup>, 14<sup>20</sup>, 19<sup>7, 4</sup>, 18<sup>23</sup>, 19<sup>1, 22</sup>

- Pr. 23** <sup>20</sup>Be not one of those who drink wine to excess,  
One of the gluttonous eaters of flesh,  
<sup>21</sup>For the drunkard and the glutton come to poverty,  
And drowsiness<sup>j</sup> clothes one with rags.
- <sup>28</sup> <sup>19</sup>He who cultivates his land has plenty of bread,  
But he who follows vain things<sup>k</sup> has plenty of poverty.<sup>l</sup>
- <sup>22</sup> <sup>16</sup>He who oppresses the poor to increase his own gain  
And he who gives bribes<sup>m</sup> come only to want.
- <sup>13</sup> <sup>18</sup>Poverty and shame come to him who shuns knowledge,  
But he who heeds reproof is honored.
- <sup>n</sup> <sup>6</sup>Go to the ant,<sup>a</sup> O lazy man;  
Consider her ways, and be wise;  
<sup>7</sup>She, having no chief,  
Overseer, nor ruler,  
<sup>8</sup>Provides her food in the summer,  
And gathers supplies in the harvest.  
<sup>9</sup>How long will you lie down, O lazy man?  
When will you arise from your slumber?  
<sup>10</sup>A little sleep, a little slumber,<sup>o</sup>  
A little folding of the hands to rest,  
<sup>11</sup>And your poverty comes as a robber,  
And your want as a well-armed man.
- <sup>24</sup> <sup>30</sup>I went by the field of the lazy man,  
By the vineyard of him who lacked sense;

Causes:  
Intem-  
perance

Shift-  
lessness

Acts of  
oppres-  
sion

Failure  
to listen  
to cor-  
rection

Laziness

<sup>i</sup> 24<sup>27</sup> Unless the first two lines are doublets, something has probably fallen out here, since we have only one line instead of the couplet which we should expect as a balance to the first two lines. The meaning of the proverb, in any case, is that means of subsistence should be assured before one undertakes to establish a family.

§ 37 Poverty was apparently common in the later Jewish community. The sages analyzed the causes of poverty with great skill and with the practical purpose of showing their disciples how to avoid it. At the same time they recognized that it was not always the result of failure or wrong-doing on the part of the poor. The sages were keenly alive to the evils of poverty, but they taught that honest poverty was not dishonorable.

<sup>j</sup> 23<sup>21</sup> *I. e.*, the torpid state that results from intemperate drinking and eating.

<sup>k</sup> 28<sup>19</sup> Or *persons*.

<sup>l</sup> 28<sup>19</sup> An intentional play on the word for *plenty*.

<sup>m</sup> 22<sup>16</sup> *Lit., gives to the rich*. The meaning of this expression is uncertain, but giving to the rich was probably equivalent to bribing the judges, who were drawn from the rich and ruling class. The object would be to secure immunity from oppression.

<sup>n</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> The ancients were ignorant of the wonderful social organization that characterizes the ants (cf. Aristotle, *De Anim.*, I, 1<sup>14</sup>). Ælian, in the third century, was the first to note that they had leaders and nobles. It was their activity and obvious industry that attracted the attention of the Hebrews.

<sup>o</sup> 6<sup>10</sup> This proverb is repeated in 24<sup>33</sup> <sup>1</sup>.

## POVERTY

- <sup>21</sup>It was all overgrown with thorns,  
 Its surface was covered with nettles,  
 And its stone wall was broken down.  
<sup>22</sup>Then I beheld and reflected,  
 I saw and received instruction:  
<sup>23</sup>A little sleep, a little slumber,  
 A little folding of the hands to rest,  
<sup>24</sup>And your poverty comes as a robber,<sup>p</sup>  
 And your want as a well-armed man.  
**10** <sup>18</sup>The rich man's wealth is his strong city,  
 The destruction of the poor is their poverty.<sup>q</sup>

**14** <sup>20</sup>A poor man is hated even by his neighbor,  
 But a rich man has many friends.

**19** <sup>7</sup>All a poor man's kinsmen hate him;  
 How much more do his friends stand aloof!<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>Wealth adds many friends,  
 But the poor—his friend draws away!

**18** <sup>28</sup>The poor man uses entreaties,  
 But the rich man answers roughly.<sup>s</sup>

**19** <sup>1</sup>Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity  
 Than he who is false in his speech, though rich.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>22</sup>A man's desire is the measure of his kindness,<sup>u</sup>  
 And a poor man is better than a liar.

Disad-  
 vantages  
 of pov-  
 erty

Prefer-  
 able to  
 dis-  
 honesty

§ 38. The Acquisition and Value of Wealth, Pr. 11<sup>16</sup>, 19<sup>14</sup>, 15<sup>6</sup>, 22<sup>4</sup>, 21<sup>5</sup>, 12<sup>11</sup>, 13<sup>4</sup>,  
 10<sup>4</sup>, 13<sup>11</sup>, 14<sup>23</sup>, 10<sup>22</sup>, 13<sup>8</sup>, 18<sup>11</sup>, 10<sup>2</sup>, 21<sup>6</sup>, 20<sup>21</sup>, 28<sup>20</sup>, <sup>22</sup>, <sup>6</sup>, 22<sup>1</sup>, 20<sup>15</sup>, 11<sup>4</sup>, <sup>28</sup>,  
 16<sup>8</sup>, 23<sup>4-5</sup>, 15<sup>16</sup>, 16<sup>19</sup>, 30<sup>7-9</sup>, 13<sup>7</sup>, 11<sup>24</sup>

**Pr. 11** <sup>16</sup>A gracious woman attains honor,  
 And violent men attain riches.

**19** <sup>14</sup>Houses and riches are an inheritance,<sup>v</sup>  
 But a prudent wife comes from the Lord.

Obtained  
 by  
 violence

By in-  
 heritance

<sup>p</sup> 24<sup>4</sup> Slightly revising the Heb., as the context requires, to agree with 6<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>q</sup> 10<sup>18</sup> Cf. 18<sup>11</sup> for a variation of the same proverb.

<sup>r</sup> 19<sup>7</sup> The words which follow in the Heb., *he who pursues words, they are not*, make no sense.

The Lat., *he who pursues only words shall have nothing*, is obviously an endeavor to read a meaning into the context. The current English translations are unwarranted. The Heb. probably represents a marginal note that has crept into the text.

<sup>s</sup> 18<sup>28</sup> Simply a reflection of the customs of the day. It is in general true to human nature in all ages.

<sup>t</sup> 19<sup>1</sup> So Syr. and the parallel in 28<sup>6</sup>. Heb., *a fool*.

<sup>u</sup> 19<sup>22</sup> The meaning of this first line is doubtful. The Heb. reads, lit., *what a man desires is his kindness*; i. e., a good intention is the essential thing, or, more probably, a man's kind acts are regulated by his motives. Gk., *mercy is fruit to a man*. Lat., *a needy man is merciful*.

¶ § 38 The wise recognized fully that wealth was a powerful motive with men and did not hesitate to employ this motive as an incentive to right conduct. They did not condemn wealth if justly acquired. On the other hand, they never made it the chief goal in life. In fact, they condemned all men and methods that aimed to acquire it rapidly, for as a rule these methods were evil, and suddenly acquired wealth was usually a curse rather than a blessing to its possessor. Many things were much more desirable than wealth. The golden mean between poverty and wealth was by far the best blessing. Above all, they taught the importance of the contented mind that left to God the provision of what was needful.

<sup>v</sup> 19<sup>14</sup> Heb. adds, of (i. e., from) fathers.

# MAN

By wise  
and right  
conduct

By dili-  
gence

By labor

Gift of  
God

Its value:  
if ac-  
quired  
justly

If ac-  
quired  
unjustly

- 15 <sup>v</sup>In the house of the righteous is much treasure,  
But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.<sup>v</sup>
- 22 <sup>z</sup>The reward of humility and reverence for the Lord  
Is riches and honor and life.
- 21 <sup>z</sup>The plans<sup>z</sup> of the diligent lead only to plenty,  
But every one who hastes<sup>y</sup> hastes only to want.
- 12 <sup>z</sup>He who cultivates his land has plenty of bread,  
But he who follows vain things is lacking in sense.<sup>z</sup>
- 13 <sup>z</sup>The lazy man<sup>a</sup> desires, and has nothing,  
But the diligent enjoys plenty.<sup>b</sup>
- 10 <sup>z</sup>Slack management<sup>c</sup> brings only poverty,  
But efficiency<sup>d</sup> makes a man rich.
- 13 <sup>z</sup>Wealth quickly<sup>e</sup> acquired grows less,  
But what is slowly amassed increases.<sup>f</sup>
- 14 <sup>z</sup>In all labor there is profit,  
But mere talk<sup>g</sup> tends only to penury.
- 10 <sup>z</sup>The blessing of the Lord makes a man rich,  
And he adds no sorrow with it.<sup>h</sup>
- 13 <sup>z</sup>The ransom of a man's life is his riches,  
But the poor has no vindicator.<sup>i</sup>
- 18 <sup>z</sup>The rich man's wealth is his strong city,  
As a high wall in his estimation.
- 10 <sup>z</sup>Treasures unjustly acquired profit nothing,  
But righteousness delivers from death.
- 21 <sup>z</sup>He who acquires<sup>j</sup> wealth by fraud<sup>k</sup>  
Pursues a bubble<sup>l</sup> into deadly snares.<sup>m</sup>
- 20 <sup>z</sup>An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning,  
But its final condition<sup>n</sup> will not be blessed.
- 28 <sup>z</sup>An honest man shall be abundantly blessed,  
But haste<sup>o</sup> to get rich shall be punished.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>v</sup> 15<sup>s</sup> Or, Gk., *the revenue of the wicked is cut off*. The above translation, however, voices the general truth that right action brings a good reward, but wickedness only trouble.

<sup>z</sup> 21<sup>s</sup> Or, with Targ., *methods*.

<sup>z</sup> 21<sup>s</sup> *I. e.*, is in a hurry to get rich.

<sup>z</sup> 12<sup>u</sup> Or, slightly changing the Heb. to make the parallelism complete, *lacks bread*. But of the more forcible parallel in 28<sup>u</sup> (§ 37).

<sup>z</sup> 13<sup>s</sup> Lit., *the soul of the lazy man*.

<sup>z</sup> 13<sup>s</sup> Lit., *is made fat*.

<sup>z</sup> 10<sup>s</sup> Lit., *a slack hand*.

<sup>z</sup> 10<sup>s</sup> Lit., *hand of the diligent*. This has the brief, crisp form of a popular proverb.

<sup>z</sup> 13<sup>u</sup> So Gk. and Lat. Heb., *by vanity*.

<sup>z</sup> 13<sup>u</sup> Following the Heb. punctuation demanded by the context. The current translation is, *but he who gathers by labor shall have increase*. The proverb reflects general experience.

<sup>z</sup> 14<sup>z</sup> Lit., *the talk of the lips*.

<sup>z</sup> 10<sup>z</sup> *I. e.*, the Lord gives men wealth without any of the regrets and disgrace that men have when they seek to acquire it unjustly.

<sup>z</sup> 13<sup>s</sup> The reading and meaning of this line are doubtful. Through a scribal repetition of 13<sup>s</sup> the last two words in the Heb. make a statement contrary to fact. The reconstruction is on the basis of the demands of the context.

<sup>z</sup> 12<sup>s</sup> Pointing the Heb. as suggested by the Gk.

<sup>z</sup> 21<sup>s</sup> Lit., *a lying tongue*.

<sup>z</sup> 21<sup>s</sup> Heb., *vapor driven to and fro*; Gk., *vanities*.

<sup>z</sup> 21<sup>s</sup> Slightly altering the Heb. (lit., *seekers of death*) in accordance with the Gk.

<sup>z</sup> 20<sup>u</sup> Lit., *end*.

<sup>z</sup> 28<sup>u</sup> Lit., *he who hastens*.

<sup>z</sup> 28<sup>u</sup> Lit., *shall not be acquitted*.

# WEALTH

- <sup>22</sup>A man with an evil eye hastes after riches,  
Not knowing that want shall come upon him.  
<sup>6</sup>Better is a poor man who lives a blameless life  
Than one who is dishonest,<sup>a</sup> though he be rich.
- <sup>22</sup> <sup>1</sup>A good name is better<sup>r</sup> than great riches,  
More highly esteemed<sup>s</sup> than silver and gold.
- <sup>20</sup> <sup>15</sup>There is gold and abundance of rubies,  
But wise lips<sup>t</sup> are a precious jewel.
- <sup>11</sup> <sup>4</sup>Wealth is not profitable in the day of wrath,  
But righteousness delivers from death.  
<sup>28</sup>He who trusts in riches shall fail,  
But the upright flourish like a green leaf.
- <sup>16</sup> <sup>8</sup>Better is a little with righteousness  
Than great revenues with injustice.
- <sup>23</sup> <sup>4</sup>Toil not that you may become rich;  
Cease through your own understanding.  
<sup>5</sup>Should you set your eyes upon it, it is gone!<sup>u</sup>  
For riches take their flight,<sup>v</sup>  
Like an eagle that soars toward heaven.
- <sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup>Better is little with reverence for the Lord  
Than great treasure and trouble as well.
- <sup>16</sup> <sup>19</sup>Better is a modest spirit with the humble  
Than to divide spoil<sup>w</sup> with the arrogant.
- <sup>30</sup> <sup>7</sup>Two things I ask of thee,<sup>x</sup>  
Deny me them not ere I die:  
<sup>8</sup>Put far from me deceit and lying,  
Give me neither poverty nor riches;  
Provide me with the food that I need,<sup>y</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>That I may not be filled to the full and deny thee,<sup>z</sup>  
And say, 'Who is the Lord?'  
Or else be poor and steal,  
And profane the name of my God.
- <sup>13</sup> <sup>7</sup>Some pretend to be<sup>z</sup> rich, yet have nothing;  
Others pretend to be<sup>z</sup> poor, yet have great wealth.
- <sup>11</sup> <sup>24</sup>One man disperses his wealth, yet grows rich;  
Another withholds too much, yet comes to want.<sup>a</sup>

Relative  
to honor

Relative  
to knowl-  
edge

Relative  
to right-  
eousness

Difficult  
to retain

Not soul-  
satisfying

The de-  
sirable  
mean

False  
and true  
attitude  
toward  
wealth

<sup>a</sup> 28<sup>a</sup> Lit., *crooked in his ways*.

<sup>r</sup> 22<sup>i</sup> Lit., *rather to be chosen*.

<sup>s</sup> 22<sup>i</sup> Or, *more lit., favor is better*.

<sup>t</sup> 20<sup>15</sup> Lit., *lips of knowledge*.

<sup>u</sup> 23<sup>s</sup> This line is uncertain in the Heb., but the VSS. suggest the reading adopted.

<sup>v</sup> 23<sup>s</sup> Lit., *make wings for themselves*, and so in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet*, from which this and the preceding proverb are derived (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15). In the next line the Egyptian proverb has *geese* where the Heb. has *eagles*. Geese were not as highly regarded by the Hebrews as by the Egyptians.

<sup>w</sup> 16<sup>19</sup> *I. e.*, share wealth. The figure, derived from warfare, was probably intended to imply that the wealth was acquired through oppression or legal injustice.

<sup>x</sup> 30<sup>7</sup>. <sup>9</sup> The archaic pronoun is retained because the words are addressed to the Deity.

<sup>y</sup> 30<sup>s</sup> Lit., *tear off for me the food of my portion*, *i. e.*, the food that is needful for me and my rightful portion. The principle underlying this noble prayer is incorporated in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, *Give us this day our daily bread*, *i. e.*, that bread which we daily need.

<sup>z</sup> 13<sup>7</sup> Lit., *make themselves*.

<sup>a</sup> 11<sup>24</sup> The liberal man prospers; the miser loses the best things of life.

# MAN

## F

### MAN IN HIS LEGAL RELATIONS

#### § 39. Legal Procedure, Pr. 18<sup>17</sup>, 25<sup>7c-10</sup>, 18<sup>18</sup>, 29<sup>24</sup>

In a  
lawsuit

- Pr. 18** <sup>17</sup>The first to speak<sup>a</sup> is right in his plea;  
Then comes his fellow<sup>b</sup> and tests him.
- 25** <sup>7c</sup>What your eyes have seen  
<sup>8</sup>Report not hastily in public,<sup>c</sup>  
For<sup>d</sup> what will you do in the end,  
When your neighbor puts you to shame?  
<sup>9</sup>Plead your case<sup>e</sup> with your neighbor himself,  
And disclose not another's secret,  
<sup>10</sup>Lest he who hears it revile you,  
And infamy be with you always.<sup>f</sup>
- 18** <sup>18</sup>The lot makes quarrels cease  
And separates the mighty.<sup>g</sup>
- 29** <sup>24</sup>He who is partner with a thief hates himself:  
He hears the oath, but tells nothing.

Use of  
the lot

Obliga-  
tions of  
an oath

#### § 40. Duties of Witnesses and Judges, Pr. 24<sup>28-29</sup>, 25<sup>18</sup>, 19<sup>28</sup>, 12<sup>17</sup>, 14<sup>25</sup>, 19<sup>5</sup>, 21<sup>28</sup>, 17<sup>23</sup>, 15<sup>27</sup>, 18<sup>5</sup>, 17<sup>26</sup>, 28<sup>21</sup>, 24<sup>24-26</sup>

Import-  
tance of  
bearing  
true tes-  
timony

- Pr. 24** <sup>28</sup>Be not a witness against your neighbor without cause,  
And do not<sup>h</sup> deceive with your lips.  
<sup>29</sup>Say not: 'I will do to him as he did to me,  
I will pay back the man for his deed.'
- 25** <sup>18</sup>A maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow  
Is he who bears false witness against his neighbor.
- 19** <sup>28</sup>A worthless witness mocks at judgment,  
And the mouth of the wicked swallows iniquity.
- 12** <sup>17</sup>He who speaks truth promotes justice,  
But a false witness sets forth deceit.
- 14** <sup>25</sup>A reliable witness saves lives,  
But he who tells lies is a deceiver.

**Man in His Legal Relations.**—Again the sound good sense of the counsel makes it surprisingly applicable to all times in spite of changes in legal forms.

§ 39 Observation evidently convinced the sages that it was best to settle controversies out of court.

<sup>a</sup> 18<sup>17</sup> The words, *to speak*, or others of similar import, are implied in the Heb. but not expressed.

<sup>b</sup> 18<sup>17</sup> *I. e.*, the opposing party. An unsound argument may seem very convincing before the other side has been heard.

<sup>c</sup> 25<sup>9</sup> Lit., *Go not forth hastily to strive*, but this has no connection with the preceding line, and the metre demands that these two lines be taken together. The above reading, requiring only the alteration of two vowels in the Heb., follows the Gk. (cf. Toy, Pr. 462).

<sup>d</sup> 25<sup>8</sup> Heb., *lest*, but this is impossible unless something has dropped out after it, as the current translations assume. The words meaning *for* and *lest* might be confused in a carelessly written manuscript.

<sup>e</sup> 25<sup>9</sup> Lit., *strive your strife*.

<sup>f</sup> 25<sup>10</sup> Lit., *your infamy turn not away*.

<sup>g</sup> 18<sup>18</sup> Casting lots is a crude type of arbitration (cp. *tossing up* in modern sport).

§ 40 The sages duly emphasize the ninth commandment.

<sup>h</sup> 24<sup>28</sup> So Gk. The Heb. is in the form of a question.



## WITNESSES AND JUDGES

- 19 <sup>5</sup>A false witness shall not go unpunished,  
Nor shall he who tells lies escape.
- 21 <sup>28</sup>A false witness shall perish,  
But a man who hears shall speak forever.<sup>i</sup>
- 17 <sup>23</sup>A wicked man takes a bribe from the bosom<sup>j</sup>  
To pervert the paths of justice.
- 15 <sup>27</sup>He who is greedy of gain brings trouble on his own house;  
But he who hates bribes shall live.
- 18 <sup>5</sup>Partiality to the wicked is not good,  
Depriving the righteous of justice.<sup>k</sup>
- 17 <sup>26</sup>Also to punish the righteous is not good,  
To smite the noble for uprightness.<sup>l</sup>
- 28 <sup>21</sup>To show partiality is not good;  
For a piece of bread a man may do wrong.
- 24 <sup>24</sup>The man who says to the wicked, 'You are right';  
Nations will curse him; peoples denounce him;  
<sup>25</sup>But it will be well with those who reprove;  
The blessing of prosperity shall rest upon them.  
<sup>26</sup>He kisses the lips  
Who gives an honest answer.<sup>m</sup>

A judge  
to show  
no par-  
tiality

### § 41. The Object of Punishment, Pr. 20<sup>30</sup>, 19<sup>19</sup>, 25, 21<sup>11</sup>

- Pr. 20 <sup>30</sup>Stripes that wound are remedies for evil,  
And strokes in the innermost parts of the body.<sup>n</sup>
- 19 <sup>19</sup>A man of great wrath shall bear the penalty,  
For if you deliver him, you must do it again.<sup>o</sup>
- <sup>25</sup>Smite a mocker, and the simple man will learn prudence,  
But reprove an intelligent man, and he will understand.<sup>p</sup>
- 21 <sup>14</sup>By the punishment of the mocker the simple man is made wise,  
But by instruction the wise man gains knowledge.<sup>q</sup>

Remedy  
for evil.

Effect  
depends  
on in-  
telligence

### § 42. Dangers of Suretyship, Pr. 22<sup>26-27</sup>, 17<sup>18</sup>, 11<sup>15</sup>, 6<sup>1-5</sup>, 20<sup>16</sup>

- Pr. 22 <sup>26</sup>Be not one of those who pledge themselves,<sup>r</sup>  
Or of those who are bondsmen for others' debts;

Brings  
personal  
loss and  
distress

<sup>i</sup> 21<sup>28</sup> This is a literal translation. No satisfying explanation of the line has been offered.  
<sup>j</sup> 17<sup>23</sup> *I. e.*, probably, the bosom of the briber, the wicked man being the judge. The expression, *from the bosom*, refers to the secrecy with which the bribe is offered and accepted (cf. 21<sup>14</sup>, § 44).  
<sup>k</sup> 18<sup>5</sup> *Lit.*, to turn aside the righteous in judgment.  
<sup>l</sup> 17<sup>26</sup> Or is contrary to justice.  
<sup>m</sup> 24<sup>26</sup> *I. e.*, he proves himself a true friend who reproves an offender.  
§ 41 The sages clearly regard punishment as redemptive rather than vindictive in purpose. Its preventive aspect is also considered.  
<sup>n</sup> 20<sup>30</sup> The meaning of this proverb is obscure and the text uncertain, but the essential thought appears to be that punishment, to be effective, must be severe.  
<sup>o</sup> 19<sup>19</sup> Another difficult proverb. No explanation or reconstruction of the text can be confidently adopted. The most obvious interpretation is that if a man of ungoverned temper is delivered from the consequences of his acts, he will repeat them and incur the same penalty again.  
<sup>p</sup> 25<sup>25</sup> *I. e.*, a word to the wise is sufficient, but the simple require an object-lesson.  
<sup>q</sup> 21<sup>11</sup> Cf. note on the preceding proverb, 19<sup>25</sup>.  
§ 42 The worldly prudence advocated here and elsewhere in the Wisdom Literature, though far from the spirit of Mt. 5<sup>40-42</sup>, is not so far from the approved practice of the modern world.  
<sup>r</sup> 22<sup>26</sup>, 17<sup>18</sup> *Lit.*, strike(s) hands.

## MAN

- <sup>27</sup>If you have nothing with which to pay,  
Why should your bed be taken from under you?<sup>7</sup>
- 17 <sup>18</sup>A man has no intelligence who pledges himself<sup>r</sup>  
And becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor.
- 11 <sup>15</sup>He who is bondsman for another<sup>a</sup> will suffer,  
But he who hates suretyship is safe.
- <sup>1</sup>My son, if you have become bondsman for your neighbor,  
If you have pledged yourself for another,  
<sup>2</sup>Have snared yourself with your lips,<sup>t</sup>  
Trapped yourself by your spoken words,  
<sup>3</sup>Then do this, my son, and be free,  
For you are in your neighbor's power:  
Go, humble yourself,<sup>u</sup>  
And importune your neighbor.  
<sup>4</sup>Give no sleep to your eyes,  
Nor slumber to your eyelids.  
<sup>5</sup>Free yourself as a gazelle from the trap;<sup>v</sup>  
And as a bird from the hand of the hunter.
- 20 <sup>16</sup>Take his garment who is<sup>w</sup> bondsman for a stranger,  
And hold him in pledge who is bondsman<sup>x</sup> for others.<sup>y</sup>

Puts a  
man  
under the  
power of  
another

Destroys  
his busi-  
ness  
standing

## G

### MAN IN HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS

§ 43. The Character and Rule of the King, Pr. 21<sup>1</sup>, 16<sup>12</sup>, 17<sup>7</sup>, 28<sup>16, 2</sup>, 20<sup>28</sup>, 25<sup>3</sup>, 16<sup>10</sup>, 20<sup>8</sup>, 29<sup>14</sup>, 31<sup>4, 5, 8, 9</sup>, 25<sup>3-5</sup>, 19<sup>12</sup>, 20<sup>2</sup>, 16<sup>15, 14, 13</sup>, 14<sup>35</sup>, 28<sup>15</sup>, 29<sup>2, 12, 4</sup>, 20<sup>26</sup>, 25<sup>13</sup>

- Pr. 21 <sup>1</sup>A king's heart in the hand of the Lord is like watercourses:  
He turns it wherever he will.<sup>a</sup>
- 16 <sup>12</sup>It is a shame for rulers to do wrong;  
For a throne is established by doing right.
- 17 <sup>7</sup>Proud speech<sup>b</sup> is not becoming to a fool,  
Still less is falsehood<sup>c</sup> to a prince.

Subject  
to the  
Lord

Princi-  
ples that  
should  
guide  
him

<sup>r</sup> 22<sup>28</sup>, 17<sup>18</sup> Lit., strike (s) hands.  
<sup>a</sup> 11<sup>15</sup> Heb., *stranger*; i. e., either a member of another clan or family or a foreigner.  
<sup>t</sup> 6<sup>2</sup> So Gk. Through a scribal error the Heb. has the phrase, *by the words of your mouth*, which recurs at the end of the vs.  
<sup>u</sup> 6<sup>3</sup> So Heb., though the meaning is doubtful. Gk., supported by the context, *do not be slack*.  
<sup>v</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> So Gk., Syr., and Targ. Heb., *hand*.  
<sup>w</sup> 20<sup>16</sup> Lit., *for he is*.  
<sup>x</sup> 20<sup>18</sup> The words, *who is bondsman*, are not repeated in the Heb.  
<sup>y</sup> 20<sup>16</sup> Lit., *strangers*, or (Heb. margin) *a strange woman*.  
Man in His Political Relations.—While the wise assumed a monarchical form of government, their sayings apply with almost equal force to democratic governments.  
§ 43 There is no revolutionary doctrine in the political ideas of the sages, unless it be involved in their insistence (characteristic of the Hebrew spirit) upon the moral responsibility of rulers.  
<sup>a</sup> 21<sup>1</sup> I. e., it is as thoroughly under control as the water in an irrigation canal.  
<sup>b</sup> 17<sup>7</sup> Lit., *a lip of superiority* (?).  
<sup>c</sup> 17<sup>7</sup> Lit., *a lip of falsehood*.

## THE KING

- 28 <sup>16</sup>A prince without insight is a great oppressor,  
But one who hates greed<sup>d</sup> will prolong his days.  
<sup>2</sup>For the transgression of a land its princes are many,  
But with intelligent men<sup>e</sup> who know the right it will endure.<sup>f</sup>
- 20 <sup>28</sup>Mercy and truth preserve the king,  
And he upholds his throne by mercy.
- 25 <sup>2</sup>The glory of God is concealing something;  
The glory of kings is searching out something. As judge
- 16 <sup>10</sup>A divine sentence is on the lips of the king;  
His mouth does not transgress in giving judgment.
- 20 <sup>8</sup>A king who sits on the throne of judgment  
Scatters<sup>g</sup> all evil with his eyes.
- 29 <sup>14</sup>The ruler who faithfully judges the poor,—  
His throne shall be established forever.
- 31 <sup>4</sup>It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine.<sup>h</sup> Sobriety  
Nor for princes to say, 'Where is strong drink?'  
<sup>5</sup>Lest they drink, and forget the law,  
And fail to give justice to the afflicted.
- <sup>8</sup>Open your mouth for the dumb;  
Uphold the rights of the suffering;<sup>i</sup> Cham-  
pionship  
of the  
poor  
<sup>9</sup>Open your mouth, and judge justly;  
Give justice to the poor and needy.
- 25 <sup>3</sup>The heavens are high,<sup>j</sup> and the earth is deep,<sup>j</sup> His plans  
secret  
But the mind of a king<sup>k</sup> is unsearchable.
- <sup>4</sup>Take away the dross from the silver,  
And out comes a vessel for the silversmith;  
<sup>5</sup>Take away the wicked from the king,  
And his throne will be established in righteousness. His coun-  
sellors
- 19 <sup>12</sup>The wrath of a king is like the roaring of a lion,  
But his favor is like dew on the grass. His favor  
or wrath
- 20 <sup>2</sup>The dread of a king is like the roaring of a lion;  
He who quarrels<sup>l</sup> with him wrongs himself.
- 16 <sup>15</sup>In the light of the king's countenance is life,  
And his favor is like a rain-cloud of Spring.<sup>m</sup>

<sup>d</sup> 28<sup>16</sup> Lit., *unjust gain*; i. e., exploiting his subjects.

<sup>e</sup> 28<sup>2</sup> Lit., *Man* (in the generic sense).

<sup>f</sup> 28<sup>2</sup> This line is hopelessly ambiguous. Whatever the exact meaning, it apparently refers to the dependence of national stability upon intelligence and knowledge in the people (or rulers). The connection between the two lines is not clear.

<sup>g</sup> 20<sup>8</sup> Or *winnows*.

<sup>h</sup> 31<sup>4</sup> The text of this verse is much disputed—particularly the proper name and the repetition.

<sup>i</sup> 31<sup>8</sup> Slightly emending the Heb., lit., *sons of passing by* (or *away*).

<sup>j</sup> 25<sup>3</sup> Lit., *for height, for depth*.

<sup>k</sup> 25<sup>3</sup> Lit., *kings*.

<sup>l</sup> 20<sup>2</sup> Heb., *is angry with him*; Gk., *angers him*.

<sup>m</sup> 16<sup>15</sup> Lit., *a cloud of the latter rain*; i. e., a cloud bringing the welcome Spring rain, upon which the growth of the crops depended.

Effects  
of his  
rule

- <sup>14</sup>The wrath of a king is like messengers of death,  
And a wise man will appease it.  
<sup>13</sup>Righteous lips are the delight of a king,  
And he loves him who speaks what is right.  
**14** <sup>35</sup>The king's favor is shown to a servant who acts wisely,  
But his anger to one who acts shamefully.  
**28** <sup>15</sup>A roaring lion and a ranging bear  
Is a wicked ruler over a poor people.  
**29** <sup>2</sup>When the righteous rule,<sup>n</sup> the people rejoice,  
But when wicked men govern, the people sigh.  
<sup>12</sup>If a ruler listens to falsehood,  
All of his courtiers are wicked.  
<sup>4</sup>A ruler by justice establishes a land;  
But he who exacts gifts ruins it.  
**20** <sup>26</sup>A wise king winnows the wicked  
And runs the wheel<sup>o</sup> over them.  
**25** <sup>13</sup>Like the cold of snow in the time<sup>p</sup> of harvest  
Is <sup>a</sup> faithful messenger to those who send him.<sup>q</sup>

§ 44. Duties of the People, Pr. 14<sup>28</sup>, 23<sup>1-3</sup>, 25<sup>6</sup>, 7, 15, 24<sup>21</sup>, 22, 17<sup>11</sup>, 13<sup>17</sup>, 18<sup>16</sup>, 21<sup>14</sup>,  
17<sup>8</sup>, 29<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>10</sup>, 11, 14, 14<sup>34</sup>

Importance of  
the  
people

Bearing  
in the  
presence  
of rulers

- Pr. 14** <sup>28</sup>In a multitude of people lies the glory of a king,  
But in a lack of subjects<sup>r</sup> lies a prince's destruction.  
**23** <sup>1</sup>When you sit down to eat with a ruler,  
Consider well who<sup>s</sup> is before you,  
<sup>2</sup>And put<sup>t</sup> a knife to your throat,  
If you have a large appetite.<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>Do not desire his dainties,—  
They are deceitful food.  
**25** <sup>6</sup>Claim not honor in a ruler's presence,  
And stand not in the place of great men;  
<sup>7</sup>For it is better that you be told, 'Come up here,'  
Than that you should be humbled before the prince.<sup>v</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>By forbearance a ruler is persuaded,  
And a soft tongue will break a bone.

Forbearance  
before a  
ruler

<sup>n</sup> 29<sup>2</sup> Heb., *increase*. The above reading requires only a slight emendation and improves the parallelism. But cf. vs. 16 (§ 58) and note.

<sup>o</sup> 20<sup>28</sup> Referring to the primitive method of threshing employed by the Hebrews.

<sup>p</sup> 25<sup>13</sup> Lit., *day*, but it is not unlikely that the original text read *heat* (so Gk. and Syr.). The two words might easily be confused in a manuscript.

<sup>q</sup> 25<sup>13</sup> Heb. has a third line: *he refreshes his master's soul*. This is probably a gloss, i. e., a scribe's explanatory note, written on the margin and in subsequent copies incorporated into the text.

§ 44 Nowhere is the non-revolutionary character of the sages' teaching more strikingly exhibited than in this section.

<sup>r</sup> 14<sup>28</sup> Lit., *people*, but the word is not the same as that used in the preceding line.

<sup>s</sup> 23<sup>1</sup> Or *what*. It is not quite clear whether Heb. in these verses refers to respectful behavior or caution against poisoning, but most commentators prefer the former alternative, and the parallel with the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Intro.*, p. 15) favors it.

<sup>t</sup> 23<sup>1</sup> Or *you will put*.

<sup>u</sup> 23<sup>1</sup> Lit., *if you are the owner of an appetite*.

<sup>v</sup> 25<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lk. 14<sup>7-11</sup>. The remainder of the vs. belongs with vs. 8 (cf. § 39).

## THE PEOPLE

- 24 <sup>21</sup>Fear the Lord, my son, and the king;  
Do not associate<sup>w</sup> with those who change,<sup>x</sup>  
22For their calamity shall rise suddenly,  
And who knows the end of their years?<sup>y</sup>  
17 <sup>11</sup>A rebel<sup>a</sup> seeks only evil,  
But a cruel messenger<sup>a</sup> shall be sent against him.  
13 <sup>17</sup>A wicked messenger falls into mischief,  
But a trustworthy envoy is health.  
18 <sup>16</sup>A man's gift makes room for him  
And brings him before great men.  
21 <sup>14</sup>A gift in secret averts anger,  
And a present in the bosom strong wrath.  
17 <sup>8</sup>A gift is a precious stone<sup>b</sup> in the eyes of its owner:<sup>o</sup>  
Wherever it<sup>d</sup> turns, it<sup>d</sup> prospers.
- 29 <sup>8</sup>Scornful men kindle discord in a city,  
But wise men turn aside wrath.  
11 <sup>10</sup>When the righteous prosper the city rejoices,  
But when the wicked perish there is shouting.  
<sup>11</sup>By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,  
But by the counsel of the wicked it is overthrown.  
<sup>14</sup>Where there is no wise guidance a people falls,  
But in much counsel there is safety.  
14 <sup>34</sup>Righteousness exalts a nation,  
But sin is the disgrace of peoples.

Loyalty  
to the  
existing  
govern-  
ment

The dip-  
lomatic  
use of a  
gift

What  
citizens  
confer  
upon  
their  
country

## H

### MAN'S DUTY TO ANIMALS

#### § 45. Consideration for Brute Beasts, Pr. 12<sup>10</sup>

- Pr. 12 <sup>10</sup>A just man regards the life of<sup>a</sup> his beast  
But the heart<sup>b</sup> of the wicked is cruel.

<sup>w</sup> 24<sup>21</sup> Lit., *mix yourself*.

<sup>x</sup> 24<sup>21</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb. The reference is not entirely clear. Revolutionists are perhaps in the mind of the sage. Cf. Rom. 13<sup>1</sup>. The Gk., following a variant and possibly original text, reads, *Do not disobey either of them*. If this be followed, the possessives in <sup>22</sup> must be regarded as equivalent to subjects, so that the vs. may be translated:

<sup>22</sup> *For the ruin they bring is sudden,  
And the destruction they send who can see?*

<sup>y</sup> 24<sup>22</sup> Or of them both, but this has no meaning in the context, unless the reading of vs. <sup>21</sup> noted above be adopted.

<sup>a</sup> 17<sup>11</sup> Lit., *rebellion*.

<sup>a</sup> 17<sup>11</sup> Or *angel*.

<sup>b</sup> 17<sup>8</sup> Or (possibly) *a lucky stone*.

<sup>c</sup> 17<sup>8</sup> Probably the giver (*i. e.*, one who has something to give) is meant rather than the recipient of a gift.

<sup>d</sup> 17<sup>8</sup> Or *he*.

**Man's Duty to Animals.**—In spite of the great apostle's scornful question (I Cor. 9<sup>9</sup>), Israel's sages and lawgivers were rightly concerned for man's dumb servants.

§ 45 Here, as in the philanthropic laws of Dt. (Vol. IV), are laid the foundations of the modern humanitarian movement.

<sup>a</sup> 12<sup>10</sup> Lit., *knows the soul of*. The Heb. word indicates not only the life but also the well-being and comfort of the animal.

<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>10</sup> This word is often translated, *tender mercies*. It means lit., *bowels*, regarded as the seat of the kindly emotions.



# MAN

## I

### MAN'S DUTY TO HIMSELF

§ 46. Temperance, Pr. 20<sup>13</sup>, 25<sup>16</sup>, 27<sup>1</sup>, 21<sup>17</sup>, 20<sup>1</sup>, 23<sup>29-35</sup>, 18<sup>21</sup>, 14<sup>3</sup>, 12<sup>13</sup>, 20<sup>25</sup>, 18<sup>13</sup>, 29<sup>20</sup>, 15<sup>23</sup>, 17<sup>28, 27</sup>, 13<sup>3</sup>, 21<sup>23</sup>, 10<sup>19</sup>, 4<sup>24</sup>

In  
sleeping

Pr. 20 <sup>13</sup>Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty;  
Open your eyes and you shall have plenty.

In eating

25 <sup>16</sup>If you find honey, eat what is sufficient,  
That you may not be surfeited and vomit it up.

27 <sup>7</sup>One who is full refuses honeycomb,  
But to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.

In  
drinking

21 <sup>17</sup>He who loves pleasure shall come to want,  
And he who loves wine and oil shall not be rich.

20 <sup>1</sup>Wine is a mocker, strong drink is turbulent,  
And whoever is misled<sup>a</sup> by it is not wise.

23 <sup>29</sup>Who cries,<sup>b</sup> 'Woe?' Who, 'Alas?'  
Who has contentions? Who complains?  
Who has wounds without cause?  
Who has redness of eyes?

<sup>30</sup>They who linger long over wine,  
They who go in to taste mixed wine.

<sup>31</sup>So look not upon the wine when it is red,  
When it sparkles<sup>c</sup> in the cup,<sup>d</sup>

<sup>32</sup>At last it bites like a snake,  
And stings like an adder.

<sup>33</sup>Then you will see strange things,  
And your mind utter distorted ideas.

<sup>34</sup>You will be like one sleeping at sea,<sup>e</sup>  
Like one asleep in a great storm.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>35</sup>'I have been struck, but I feel no pain;  
I have been beaten, but I am not conscious of it.  
When shall I awake from my wine?<sup>g</sup>  
I will seek it yet again.'

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**Man's Duty to Himself.**—In their interest in the simplest details of personal life the sages were forerunners of the rabbis whose teachings are found in the Talmud, but the hair-splitting casuistry of the rabbis is alien to the spirit of the wise.

§ 46 Wine was commonly used as food by the Israelites, especially in connection with their religious feasts, cf. Dt. 14<sup>26</sup>. The Nazirites, the Rechabites, and, in later times, the priests were under obligation to refrain from it, because it was associated with the corrupt Canaanite civilization. The evils of intemperance were denounced by prophets like Isaiah, but the sages were the first to point out in detail its malign effects upon the individual.

<sup>a</sup> 20<sup>1</sup> Lit., *errs*.

<sup>b</sup> 23<sup>29</sup> Lit., *who has*. The sage here graphically reproduces the crazed exclamations of those who engage in drunken brawls.

<sup>c</sup> 23<sup>31</sup> Lit., *gives its eye*; i. e., sparkles or gleams.

<sup>d</sup> 23<sup>31</sup> Heb. adds, *it goes straight*; i. e., glides down smoothly. This is probably a later scribal comment or a fragment of an original couplet. Cf. Sg. of Sgs., 7<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> 23<sup>34</sup> Lit., *in the midst of the sea*; i. e., in a boat at sea.

<sup>f</sup> 23<sup>34</sup> The exact meaning of the Heb. is unknown. The Gk. is followed in correcting the Heb.

<sup>g</sup> 23<sup>35</sup> Supplying the words required by the metre and the allusion in the second line.

## TEMPERANCE

- 18 <sup>2f</sup>Life and death are in the power of the tongue;  
They who are fond of using it must eat its fruit.
- 14 <sup>3</sup>In the mouth of fools is a sprig of pride,<sup>b</sup>  
But the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
- 12 <sup>13</sup>By the sin of his lips a wicked man is ensnared,<sup>i</sup>  
But a righteous man escapes trouble.
- 20 <sup>25</sup>It is a snare to a man rashly to say, 'It is holy,'<sup>j</sup>  
And after vows to make inquiry.
- 18 <sup>13</sup>He who answers before he hears  
Covers himself with confusion.
- 29 <sup>20</sup>Do you see a man who speaks before he thinks?  
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 15 <sup>23</sup>A man has joy from the utterance<sup>k</sup> of his mouth,  
And a word in due season, how good it is!
- 17 <sup>28</sup>Even a fool, if he keeps still, is considered wise;  
Prudent, if he keeps his lips shut.
- <sup>27</sup>He who is sparing of his words has knowledge,  
And he who has a cool spirit is a man of sense.
- 13 <sup>3</sup>He who guards his mouth preserves his life,  
But he who opens wide his lips—it is his ruin.
- 21 <sup>23</sup>He who guards his mouth and tongue  
Guards himself against trouble.
- 10 <sup>19</sup>In much talk<sup>l</sup> transgression is not lacking,  
But he who controls his lips acts wisely.<sup>m</sup>
- 4 <sup>24</sup>Banish from you crooked speech,  
And put deception far from your lips.

In the  
use of  
words

§ 47. Self-restraint, Pr. 25<sup>28</sup>, 14<sup>17</sup>, 29<sup>11</sup>, 19<sup>11</sup>, 14<sup>29</sup>, 16<sup>32</sup>, 29<sup>3</sup>, 31<sup>3</sup>, 23<sup>26-28</sup>, 22<sup>14</sup>, 30<sup>20</sup>,  
51-14, 620-35, 71-27

Pr. 25 <sup>28</sup>A man without self-control

Is a ruined city whose wall is broken.

14 <sup>17</sup>The quick-tempered man acts foolishly,  
And a malicious plotter is hated.

29 <sup>11</sup>A fool gives vent to his wrath,  
But a wise man restrains<sup>n</sup> his anger.<sup>o</sup>

In con-  
trolling  
the  
temper

<sup>b</sup> 14<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, a shoot sprouting from the mouth of fools. The Heb. word is used elsewhere only in Is. 11<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> 12<sup>13</sup> So Gk. Heb., *is an evil snare*. The Gk. adds what may be an original proverb that has been lost from the Heb.:

*He whose looks are mild will be pitied,*

*He who enters into litigation in the gates will bring trouble on souls.*

Probably the last line originally read, *on himself*.

<sup>j</sup> 20<sup>27</sup> When a Hebrew declared a thing to be holy or consecrated, it belonged to Jehovah and could never be claimed again by him. The proverb guards against rash devotion and later subterfuges to recover the possession.

<sup>k</sup> 15<sup>23</sup> Lit., *answer*. *I. e.*, what a man says determines his success and therefore happiness.

<sup>l</sup> 10<sup>19</sup> Lit., *a multitude of words*.

<sup>m</sup> 10<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Sayings of the Fathers*, 31<sup>3</sup>, *Silence is a hedge about wisdom*.

§ 47 The importance attached by the sages to the control of the temper and of sexual passion is evinced by the number and elaboration of the proverbs devoted to these matters.

<sup>n</sup> 29<sup>11</sup> So Gk. Heb. is corrupt.

<sup>o</sup> 29<sup>11</sup> Following a slightly revised Heb. text that is strongly supported by the context. †

## MAN

- 19 <sup>11</sup>A man's wisdom makes him patient,  
It is his glory to overlook faults.
- 14 <sup>29</sup>The patient man shows great wisdom,  
But the quick-tempered man acts like a fool!
- 16 <sup>32</sup>He who is patient is better than a warrior,  
And he who rules his temper than he who takes a city.
- 29 <sup>3</sup>He who loves wisdom rejoices his father,  
But he who associates with harlots wastes his wealth.
- 31 <sup>3</sup>Give not your strength to women,  
Nor your morals to those who slay kings.<sup>p</sup>
- 23 <sup>26</sup>My son, give me your attention,<sup>q</sup>  
And pay careful heed<sup>r</sup> to my guidance.
- <sup>27</sup>For a harlot is a deep pit,  
And an adulteress<sup>a</sup> a narrow well.
- <sup>28</sup>She lies in wait as a robber,  
And increases the faithless among men.<sup>t</sup>
- 22 <sup>14</sup>The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit;  
He who is abhorred of the Lord shall fall in it.
- 30 <sup>20</sup>This is the way of an adulteress:  
She eats and wipes her mouth,  
And says, 'I have done no wrong.'
- 5 <sup>1</sup>My son, give heed to my wisdom,<sup>u</sup>  
Lend your ear to my understanding,<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>That discretion may watch over you,<sup>v</sup>  
And the knowledge of your lips may keep you.<sup>w</sup>
- <sup>3</sup>For the lips of a harlot drop honey,  
And her speech<sup>x</sup> is smoother than oil,  
<sup>4</sup>But at the last<sup>y</sup> she is bitter as wormwood,  
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
- <sup>5</sup>Her feet lead down to death,  
And her steps reach<sup>z</sup> the abode of the dead.
- <sup>6</sup>She does not make level the path of life:<sup>a</sup>  
Her paths are unstable, though she knows it not.
- <sup>7</sup>Now therefore, my son,<sup>b</sup> give heed,  
And do not depart from my words.

<sup>p</sup> 31<sup>3</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb.

<sup>q</sup> 23<sup>26</sup> Lit., *heart, mind*; *i. e.*, attention.

<sup>r</sup> 23<sup>26</sup> So the VSS. Heb., *take delight in*.

<sup>a</sup> 23<sup>27</sup> Lit., *strange woman*; *i. e.*, one belonging to another clan or family and therefore an adulteress; cf. 7<sup>15, 14</sup>, where this relation is made very clear.

<sup>t</sup> 23<sup>28</sup> *I. e.*, those who yield to her attractions and are faithless to their marital obligations.

<sup>u</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> Or *to wisdom and to understanding*. The wise nowhere else claim that they themselves speak wisdom or understanding, but only that they are able to develop those qualities in others.

<sup>v</sup> 5<sup>2</sup> The text is defective. *Over you* is implied, but not found in the Heb. Cf. 2<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>w</sup> 5<sup>2</sup> Following suggestions contained in the Gk. in restoring the sense required by the context. Heb., *that your lips may keep knowledge*, but this makes little sense. Toy restores, *That knowledge may keep thee* (Pr. 101).

<sup>x</sup> 5<sup>3</sup> Lit., *palate*.

<sup>y</sup> 5<sup>4</sup> Lit., *her last*.

<sup>z</sup> 5<sup>5</sup> Lit., *take hold on* (the path).

<sup>a</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> The contrast is with 4<sup>22</sup>. The VSS. supply the negative required instead of the Heb., *lest*.

<sup>b</sup> 5<sup>7</sup> So Gk. and Lat. and the parallels in 5<sup>1, 20</sup>. Heb., *sons*.

## SELF-RESTRAINT

- <sup>8</sup>Keep the course of your life far from her,  
And go not near the door of her house;  
<sup>9</sup>Lest you give your honor<sup>a</sup> to others,  
And the toil of your years<sup>d</sup> to the cruel;<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>Lest strangers enjoy your wealth,  
And your labors pass to an alien;  
<sup>11</sup>Lest you groan when your end shall come,  
<sup>f</sup>When your flesh and body are consumed,  
<sup>12</sup>And say, 'Alas! I hated instruction,  
And my mind has despised reproof;  
<sup>13</sup>I have disregarded the voice of my teachers,  
Nor given heed to my instructors!  
<sup>14</sup>I was nearly overwhelmed by calamity<sup>f</sup>  
In the congregation and the assembly.'
- 6** <sup>20</sup>My son, keep your father's precept,  
And reject not your mother's teaching.  
<sup>21</sup>Bind them continually upon your heart,  
Tie them about your neck,  
<sup>22</sup>For their precept is a lamp,<sup>g</sup> and their teaching is light;  
Reproofs and instruction<sup>h</sup> are the way of life.  
<sup>22</sup>When you walk, wisdom<sup>i</sup> will lead you;  
When you lie down, she will watch over you,  
And when you awake, she will talk with you.  
<sup>24</sup>To keep you from the evil woman,  
And from the wiles of the stranger's tongue.  
<sup>25</sup>Lust not after her beauty in your heart;  
Let her not capture you with her glances,<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>For a harlot seeks only a morsel,<sup>k</sup>  
But the adulteress hunts precious life.  
<sup>27</sup>Can a man take fire in his bosom  
And his clothes not be burned?  
<sup>28</sup>Or can one walk on hot coals  
And his feet not be scorched?  
<sup>29</sup>So with him who goes in to his neighbor's wife;  
Whoever touches her shall not go unpunished.

<sup>a</sup> 5<sup>9</sup> Gk., *life*. Syr. and Targ., *wealth*.

<sup>d</sup> 5<sup>9</sup> Lit., *and your years*.

<sup>e</sup> 5<sup>9</sup> Targ., *aliens*; possibly this reading is original.

<sup>f</sup> 5<sup>14</sup> Lit., *in all evil*; i. e., had experienced all that calamity could bring.

<sup>g</sup> 6<sup>22</sup> This vs. is obviously the immediate sequel of <sup>21</sup>. Vs. <sup>22</sup>, on the other hand, is the more obvious introduction to <sup>24</sup>, for wisdom, which is the implied antecedent in <sup>22</sup>, is what keeps the inexperienced from the temptations of the evil woman.

<sup>h</sup> 6<sup>23</sup> So Gk., Syr., and Targ. Heb., *reproofs of instruction* (one MS. reads, *reproof of instruction*).

<sup>i</sup> 6<sup>22</sup> Supplying the subject, which is not expressed in the Heb., though suggested by the form of the verb (lit., *she will lead you*).

<sup>j</sup> 6<sup>25</sup> Lit., *eyelids*.

<sup>k</sup> 6<sup>26</sup> Following the acute suggestion of Toy (Pr. 136, 137) in emending the corrupt Heb. The VSS. read, *for the price of a harlot is a loaf of bread*; i. e., prostitution is less costly and dangerous than adultery. Of course, if this be the correct interpretation, the sage is not recommending prostitution but sounding an earnest, emphatic warning against adultery.

## MAN

- <sup>30</sup>Do not<sup>1</sup> men despise a thief, if he steal  
 To satisfy his appetite when he is hungry?  
<sup>31</sup>And if he is caught he must restore sevenfold,  
 He must give all the wealth of his house.  
<sup>32</sup>He who commits adultery is devoid of sense.  
 He destroys himself who does so.  
<sup>33</sup>Wounds and dishonor shall he receive,  
 And his disgrace shall not be wiped away.  
<sup>34</sup>For jealousy makes a man furious,<sup>m</sup>  
 And he will have no pity in the day of vengeance.  
<sup>35</sup>He will consider no satisfaction,<sup>n</sup>  
 Nor be content, though you give many gifts.

- 7 <sup>1</sup>My son, keep my words,  
 And lay up my precepts with you.  
<sup>2</sup>Keep my precepts and live,  
 And my teaching as the apple of your eye.<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>Bind them on your fingers,  
 Write them on the tablet of your mind.  
<sup>4</sup>Say to Wisdom, 'You are my sister,'  
 And call Understanding your friend,<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>That they may keep you from another's wife,  
 From the adulteress, with her enticing words.  
<sup>6</sup>For at the window of my house  
 I looked out through my lattice,  
<sup>7</sup>And I saw<sup>q</sup> and discerned among the youths  
 A young man devoid of understanding  
<sup>8</sup>Passing along the street near her corner,  
 And he was walking on the way to her house  
<sup>9</sup>In the twilight, at the close of day,<sup>r</sup>  
 In the depth<sup>s</sup> of the night and the darkness.  
<sup>10</sup>And, behold, a woman comes to meet him,  
 Attired as a harlot<sup>t</sup> and with secretive mind.<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>11</sup>She is restless and wilful;<sup>v</sup>  
 Her feet abide not in her house:

<sup>1</sup> <sup>630</sup> This vs. is best taken as a question, following certain MSS. It is not at all probable that the wise would in any case condone a theft.

<sup>m</sup> <sup>634</sup> Lit., *is the fury of a man*.

<sup>n</sup> <sup>635</sup> Lit., *ransom*, but this has not the same connotation as the Heb. word, which indicates anything accepted as a substitute for punishment or vengeance.

<sup>o</sup> <sup>72</sup> I. e., the pupil, standing for the eye, a man's most delicate and precious possession. Cf. 20<sup>30</sup>, Dt. 32<sup>19</sup>, Ps. 17<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> <sup>74</sup> Lit., *kinswoman*, but the word "involves the idea of intimate friendship" (Toy, Pr. 145).

<sup>q</sup> <sup>77</sup> The Heb. has been supplemented by a parallel phrase, *among the inexperienced*, which anticipates the second line of the couplet.

<sup>r</sup> <sup>79</sup> Lit., *evening of the day*.

<sup>s</sup> <sup>79</sup> Lit., *in the pupil*; i. e., middle or depth.

<sup>t</sup> <sup>710</sup> Gk., *with the appearance of a harlot*.

<sup>u</sup> <sup>710</sup> Lit., *guarded of mind*.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>711</sup> Or, revising the Heb. according to Sg. of Sgs., 3<sup>d</sup>. s., a *gadabout*.



## SELF-RESTRAINT

- <sup>12</sup>Now she is in the street, now in the open places,  
And lies in wait at every corner.
- <sup>13</sup>So she seizes him and kisses him,  
With an impudent face she says to him:
- <sup>14</sup>I vowed<sup>w</sup> sacrifices of peace offerings;  
To-day I have paid my vows.<sup>x</sup>
- <sup>15</sup>So I came out to meet you,  
Eagerly to seek you, and I have found you.
- <sup>16</sup>I have spread my couch with tapestries,  
With striped cloths of Egyptian yarn;
- <sup>17</sup>I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh,  
With aloes and cinnamon.
- <sup>18</sup>Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;  
Let us enjoy each other's love.<sup>y</sup>
- <sup>19</sup>For my husband is not at home;  
He has gone on a long journey;
- <sup>20</sup>He has taken a bag of money with him;  
He will come home at the full moon.<sup>z</sup>
- <sup>21</sup>With her fair speech she makes him yield;  
With the blandishment of her lips she compels him.
- <sup>22</sup>Enticed,<sup>a</sup> he goes after her  
Like an ox that goes to the slaughter,  
Like a dog led into bonds,<sup>b</sup>
- <sup>23</sup>Until an arrow pierces his liver,—<sup>c</sup>  
Like a bird rushing into a net,  
Not knowing it is spread for<sup>d</sup> his life.
- <sup>24</sup>So now, my son,<sup>e</sup> listen to me,  
And pay attention to what I say.
- <sup>25</sup>Do not let your mind turn to her ways;  
Do not go astray in her paths.
- <sup>26</sup>For many are the wounded whom she made fall,  
And a mighty host are all those slain by her.
- <sup>27</sup>In her house there are ways to Sheol,<sup>f</sup>  
Going down to the chambers of death.

<sup>w</sup> 714 Lit., *upon me* (were), a common expression for what is obligatory or incumbent upon a person.

<sup>x</sup> 714 The inference seems to be that the sacrificial feast is just ready and she seeks guests to share it with her. The flesh of the votive offering had to be eaten on the day it was sacrificed (Lev. 7<sup>15</sup>).

<sup>y</sup> 715 Lit., *enjoy ourselves in love*.

<sup>z</sup> 720 *I. e.*, a week or two hence, to attend the full-moon feast. Vs. 9 indicates that the imaginary scene described above took place early in the month, or at least when the moon was not present to light the heavens.

<sup>a</sup> 722 So Gk. Through a slight scribal error the Heb. reads *suddenly*.

<sup>b</sup> 722 The Heb. is hopelessly corrupt. Gk., Syr., and Targ., supported by the context, read, *Like a dog to bonds*. A slight correction of the remaining Heb. word gives the verb required by the context.

<sup>c</sup> 723 This line must evidently be restored to its logical position, as above.

<sup>d</sup> 723 Lit., *is against*; *i. e.*, it was spread for the purpose of taking his life.

<sup>e</sup> 724 So Gk. and the parallels.

<sup>f</sup> 724 Lit., *her house is ways to Sheol*; *i. e.*, there are many ways in her house that lead to death.

# MAN

§ 48. Attitude Toward Temptation, Pr. 28<sup>14</sup>, 27<sup>12</sup>, 14<sup>16</sup>, 21<sup>29</sup>, 4<sup>25-27</sup>, 24<sup>1-2</sup>, 17<sup>14</sup>, 1<sup>10</sup>,  
4<sup>14-17</sup>, 23<sup>8-9</sup>, 17<sup>4</sup>, 25<sup>26</sup>

To  
avoid it

Pr. 28 <sup>14</sup>Happy is the man who is ever on his guard,  
But he who is obdurate falls into misfortune.

27 <sup>12</sup>A prudent man sees evil and hides,  
Simpletons go on and are punished.

14 <sup>16</sup>A wise man fears and avoids misfortune,  
But the fool is arrogant and confident.<sup>a</sup>

21 <sup>29</sup>A wicked man hardens his face,  
But an upright man considers<sup>b</sup> his ways.

4 <sup>25</sup>Let your eyes look right ahead,  
And let your gaze be straight before you.

<sup>26</sup>Let the path for your feet be level,<sup>1</sup>  
And let all your ways be stable.

<sup>27</sup>Turn not to right nor to left,  
Keep your foot far from evil.

24 <sup>1</sup>Do not envy wicked men,  
Nor desire to be with them,

<sup>2</sup>For their minds meditate on violence,  
And their lips talk of mischief.

17 <sup>14</sup>The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water;  
Therefore leave off contention before quarrelling begins.

1 <sup>10</sup>My son, if sinners entice you,  
Do not consent.

4 <sup>14</sup>Enter not into the path of the wicked,  
And walk not in the way of bad men;

<sup>15</sup>Avoid it, pass not over it,  
Turn from it and pass on.

<sup>16</sup>For they do not sleep unless they have done harm,  
And their sleep is taken away unless they have made someone  
stumble.

<sup>17</sup>For they eat the bread of wickedness  
And drink the wine of violence.

23 <sup>6</sup>Eat not the bread of him who is inhospitable,<sup>j</sup>  
Nor desire to share his dainties,

<sup>7</sup>For he is like one who keeps his thoughts to himself:<sup>k</sup>

§ 48 The practical wisdom of the sages appears again in their counsel to avoid temptation and the sources of temptation.

<sup>a</sup> 14<sup>16</sup> Lit., *lets himself pass beyond bonds*. Ordinarily it means *throw himself into a passion*. Possibly it should be interpreted, *acts insolently*. Gk., Syr., and Targ., *mingled with (it)*.

<sup>b</sup> 21<sup>29</sup> So Gk. and the marginal reading of the Heb. Trad. Heb., *established*.

<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>25</sup> I. e., follow the level and straight path, not turning aside into the alluring but perilous bypaths.

<sup>j</sup> 23<sup>6</sup> Lit., *has an evil eye*.

<sup>k</sup> 23<sup>7</sup> The exact meaning of this line is not certain. Toy (Pr. 429) revises to read:

*For as he deals with himself,  
So he deals with you.*

The word rendered above *keeps his thoughts* (lit., *calculates*) may be pointed to read *a hair*. So Gk. and Syr. A recent writer (Julian Weill, in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XLIV, pp. 82 f.) defends this reading and argues that the word rendered above *to himself* (lit., *in his soul*) means *in his throat*. In support of this interpretation he cites a parallel from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. Introd., p. 15), as well as the usage of the cognate word in Assyrian, which had been previously urged as a ground for the same interpretation in other O.T. passages. The line would then read: *For it (i. e., the hospitality of an avaricious man) is like a hair in the throat*. This closely resembles the Gk.

## TEMPTATION

'Eat and drink,' he says to you,  
But his heart is not with you.

<sup>8</sup>The morsel you have eaten you shall spit out,  
And you shall lose your sweet words.<sup>1</sup>

17 <sup>4</sup>An evil-doer gives heed to wicked words,<sup>m</sup>  
And a false man<sup>n</sup> gives ear to a mischievous tongue.

25 <sup>26</sup>As a troubled<sup>o</sup> fountain and a ruined spring,  
So is a just man who gives way before the wicked.

§ 49. Importance of Prudence and Tact, Pr. 11<sup>22</sup>, 14<sup>8</sup>, 22<sup>3</sup>, 14<sup>15</sup>, 19<sup>2</sup>, 26<sup>10</sup>, <sup>4</sup>

Pr. 11 <sup>22</sup>As a ring of gold in a hog's snout,  
So is a fair woman without discretion.<sup>p</sup>

Dis-  
cretion  
essential

14 <sup>8</sup>A prudent man's wisdom is to understand his way,<sup>q</sup>  
But the folly of fools leads them astray.<sup>r</sup>

Prudence  
the only  
safe guide  
in life

22 <sup>3</sup>A prudent man sees evil and hides,  
Simpletons go on and are punished.

14 <sup>16</sup>The simpleton believes everything,  
But the prudent man looks where he goes.

19 <sup>2</sup>Also to act without reflection<sup>s</sup> is not good,  
And he who makes haste with his feet misses the mark.

26 <sup>10</sup>A master-workman does everything himself,  
But a fool hires those who pass by.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Answer not a fool according to his folly,  
Lest you also be like him.

Tact  
with a  
fool

§ 50. Value of Learning from the Wise, Pr. 15<sup>31</sup>, 13<sup>20</sup>

Pr. 15 <sup>31</sup>The ear that hearkens to life-giving admonition  
Shall abide among the wise.

Receptive  
attitude

13 <sup>20</sup>Walk<sup>u</sup> with the wise and you shall be wise,  
But the companion of fools shall have trouble.

Right  
asso-  
ciates

<sup>1</sup> 23<sup>8</sup> Possibly this line originally followed <sup>2</sup>. If it belongs in its present context, the meaning is that all his endeavors to cultivate the friendship of a niggardly man have been in vain. The passage has a close parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15). Prof. Torrey suggests emending the Heb. to read *his words* (i. e., those quoted in <sup>1</sup>).

<sup>m</sup> 17<sup>4</sup> Lit., *tips*.

<sup>n</sup> 17<sup>4</sup> Lit., *falsity*.

<sup>o</sup> 25<sup>26</sup> Lit., *trampled*, and therefore befouled.

§ 49 Prudence and tact were among the chief qualities that the wise sought to develop in their disciples.

<sup>p</sup> 11<sup>22</sup> *I. e.*, beauty without discretion is still hideous.

<sup>q</sup> 14<sup>8</sup> *I. e.*, consists in understanding fully the course of conduct which he should follow.

<sup>r</sup> 14<sup>8</sup> Following the Gk., which has apparently preserved the original reading. Heb., *is deceit*.

<sup>s</sup> 19<sup>2</sup> Following Toy's acute suggestion (Pr. 368). Heb., lit., *without knowledge of soul*.

<sup>t</sup> 26<sup>10</sup> This obscure vs. has been a block of stumbling to all translators. The VSS. differ widely. The above is a literal translation of the Heb., with the exception of the words, *and hires*, which have been repeated by mistake.

§ 50 The theme of these proverbs is often repeated in other connections.

<sup>u</sup> 13<sup>20</sup> Following the accepted Heb. rather than the marginal reading, which represents an attempt to make the parallelism more perfect.

§ 51. Importance of Being Ruled by Right Motives, Pr. 21<sup>10</sup>, 11<sup>23</sup>, 27

Each man determines his own environment

- Pr. 21** <sup>10</sup>The wicked<sup>v</sup> desires to do harm;  
His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.<sup>w</sup>  
**11** <sup>23</sup>The desire of the righteous is only good;  
The expectation of the wicked is wrath.  
<sup>27</sup>He who seeks good seeks<sup>x</sup> favor,  
But he who seeks evil, it shall come to him.

§ 52. Meekness, Pr. 21<sup>24</sup>, 25<sup>27</sup>, 21<sup>4</sup>, 26<sup>12</sup>, 16<sup>18</sup>, 18<sup>12</sup>, 11<sup>2</sup>, 13<sup>10</sup>, 29<sup>23</sup>, 12<sup>9</sup>, 27<sup>2</sup>

Evils of pride and self-seeking

- Pr. 21** <sup>24</sup>'Scorner' is the name of the proud, haughty man,  
Who acts with overbearing pride.  
**25** <sup>27</sup>It is not good to eat much honey;  
But to seek the glory of others is glorious.<sup>v</sup>  
**21** <sup>4</sup>A haughty look and a proud heart—  
The lamp<sup>a</sup> of the wicked—are sin.  
**26** <sup>12</sup>Do you see a man wise in his own opinion?  
There is more hope for a fool than for him.  
**16** <sup>18</sup>Pride goes before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before a fall.  
**18** <sup>12</sup>Before destruction a man's mind is haughty;  
Before honor there is humility.<sup>a</sup>  
**11** <sup>2</sup>When pride comes, then comes disgrace,  
But with the humble is wisdom.  
**13** <sup>10</sup>Through pride comes only strife,  
But with those who take counsel is wisdom.  
**29** <sup>23</sup>A man's pride will bring him low;  
But he who is of a lowly spirit will obtain honor.  
**12** <sup>9</sup>Better off is he who has no social distinction,<sup>b</sup> yet has a servant,  
Than he who makes great pretensions, yet lacks bread.  
**27** <sup>2</sup>Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;  
Some other, and not your own lips.

Of false pretensions

Personal modesty

§ 51 The wise would have agreed that it is the things which come out of a man that defile him (Mk. 7<sup>15</sup>).

<sup>v</sup> 21<sup>10</sup> Lit., *the soul of the wicked*.

<sup>w</sup> 21<sup>10</sup> *I. e.*, is not regarded with kindly feelings.

<sup>x</sup> 11<sup>27</sup> Possibly the text should be revised, after the analogy of 3<sup>13</sup>, so as to read, *wins*.

§ 52 Presumption and conceit are the antithesis of the spirit of the wise.

<sup>v</sup> 25<sup>27</sup> The meaning and text of this verse are doubtful.

<sup>a</sup> 21<sup>4</sup> So Gk., Syr., Targ., Lat., and some Heb. MSS. The meaning is not certain and the text may be corrupt. *Lamp* is in apposition with the first line. The thought may be: pride is the chief source of the joy of the wicked (cf. 13<sup>9</sup>, Job 18<sup>9</sup>), but it is sinful and therefore but ephemeral. Or it may be that two lines have fallen out (<sup>4a</sup> having been the first line of one couplet and <sup>4b</sup> the second line of another); <sup>4b</sup> may then be taken as a clause in itself: *the lamp of the wicked is sin*.

<sup>a</sup> 18<sup>12</sup> The construction in the Heb. is the same in this vs. as in 16<sup>18</sup>, no verb being expressed in either case. The meaning of both vs. is exactly that of Lk. 14<sup>11</sup>, 18<sup>14</sup>: *For every one who puts himself forward will be humiliated, but he who does not put himself forward will be honored*.

<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>9</sup> Lit., *is lightly esteemed*. From I Sam. 18<sup>23</sup> and Is. 3<sup>5</sup> it is clear that the reference is to social standing. In contrast stands the man who acts as if he were deserving high honor; i. e., pretends that he is a noble.

## PURITY AND UPRIGHTNESS

§ 53. Purity and Uprightness of Purpose, Pr. 22<sup>5</sup>, 21<sup>8</sup>, 22<sup>11</sup>, 4<sup>23</sup>, 11<sup>5-6</sup>, 13<sup>6</sup>,  
12<sup>3</sup>, 16<sup>17</sup>

- Pr. 22** <sup>5</sup>Traps<sup>o</sup> and snares are in the way of the lawless;  
He who cares for his life keeps away from them.
- 21** <sup>6</sup>The way of the guilty is crooked,  
But the pure man—his conduct is straight.<sup>d</sup>
- 22** <sup>11</sup>He who loves purity of heart,  
On whose lips is grace,—the king is his friend.<sup>e</sup>
- 4** <sup>23</sup>Guard your heart above all things,  
For from it come the sources of life.
- 11** <sup>7</sup>The righteousness of the perfect man makes his way straight,  
But by his own wickedness the wicked shall fall.  
<sup>6</sup>The righteousness of the upright saves them,  
But the treacherous are trapped by their own craft.<sup>f</sup>
- 13** <sup>6</sup>Righteousness guards him whose life is upright,<sup>g</sup>  
But wickedness destroys the sinner.
- 12** <sup>3</sup>No man is established by wickedness,  
But the root of the righteous stands unmoved.
- 16** <sup>17</sup>The highway of the upright is departing from evil;  
He who watches his way preserves his life.

The  
blessed-  
ness of  
the pure  
in heart

### J

#### MAN'S DUTY TO OTHERS

§ 54. Evils to Avoid, Pr. 10<sup>26</sup>, 11<sup>12</sup>, 28<sup>8, 25</sup>, 10<sup>12</sup>, 29<sup>22</sup>, 15<sup>18</sup>, 27<sup>4</sup>, 24<sup>17-18</sup>, 20<sup>22</sup>, 17<sup>13</sup>,  
3<sup>30</sup>, 30<sup>32-33</sup>, 20<sup>2</sup>, 26<sup>17</sup>, 17<sup>19</sup>, 22<sup>10</sup>, 18<sup>6</sup>, 26<sup>21</sup>, 17<sup>14</sup>, 1, 27<sup>14</sup>, 29<sup>5</sup>, 26<sup>23</sup>, 28<sup>23</sup>, 26<sup>23-27</sup>,  
14<sup>5</sup>, 13<sup>5</sup>, 12<sup>19</sup>, 25<sup>14</sup>, 20<sup>17, 28, 28</sup>, 11<sup>13</sup>, 20<sup>19</sup>, 26<sup>18-19</sup>, 13<sup>2</sup>, 18<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>9</sup>, 25<sup>23</sup>, 26<sup>20</sup>,  
16<sup>23</sup>, 10<sup>18</sup>, 3<sup>29</sup>, 16<sup>27, 30</sup>, 10<sup>10</sup>, 6<sup>12-15</sup>, 24<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>26</sup>, 22<sup>22-23</sup>, 28, 23<sup>10-11</sup>, 12<sup>6</sup>, 16<sup>29</sup>, 29<sup>10</sup>,  
28<sup>28</sup>, 3<sup>31-32</sup>, 1<sup>10-19</sup>

**Pr. 10** <sup>26</sup>As vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes,  
So is a lazy man to those who send him.

Indolence

§ 53 In this section the wise anticipate Jesus in placing the chief emphasis on the motives and character that determine the acts of an individual (cf. § 51).

<sup>a</sup> 22<sup>5</sup> Following the VSS. in reading *traps* instead of *thorns*.

<sup>d</sup> 21<sup>6</sup> The word translated *pure* means also *innocent*; if *guilty* is the true meaning of the word so rendered, the verse refers to the devious ways of the guilt-laden, as contrasted with the plain, straight path of him whose conscience is clear. It may be, however, that the contrast intended is simply that between crooked and straight dealing. The word translated *guilty* occurs nowhere else, and its derivation is doubtful; it may even be the result of a scribe's carelessness in writing twice the word for *pure*, which it immediately precedes and very closely resembles in appearance.

<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>11</sup> This vs. is a little awkward, although intelligible. Possibly it should be emended to read:

*The king loves the pure of heart,  
And grace of lips is his delight.*

<sup>f</sup> 11<sup>6</sup> Heb., *desire or calamity*. The proverb echoes the thought of Hab. 24, *The upright lives by his faithfulness*.

<sup>g</sup> 13<sup>6</sup> Lit., *the upright of way*.

**Man's Duty to Others.**—The evils condemned and the virtues commended in these sections are largely those which have occupied attention in the passages concerning man in his various relationships. In general those passages reflect observation of the facts of life, while these are more hortatory in nature.

§ 54 The qualities and practices here censured may be summarized as those which keep a man from being a good neighbor and citizen. They are the vices most commonly encountered in every community and in all ages.



## MAN

- Disdain-fulness**      **11** <sup>12</sup>One who despises his neighbor lacks sense,  
But a man of insight keeps silence.
- Greed**      **28** <sup>8</sup>One who adds to his wealth by interest and increase  
Hoards it for a benefactor of the poor.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>25</sup>A greedy man stirs up strife,  
But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.
- Hatred**      **10** <sup>12</sup>Hatred stirs up strife,  
But love overlooks faults.
- Anger**      **29** <sup>22</sup>An ill-tempered man stirs up strife,  
And a wrathful man abounds in transgression.  
**15** <sup>18</sup>A quick-tempered man stirs up strife,  
But a patient man quiets contention.
- Jealousy**      **27** <sup>4</sup>Oh, the fierceness of wrath! The flood of anger!  
But who can stand before jealousy?
- Revenge**      **24** <sup>17</sup>At the fall of your foe be not glad,  
And at his stumbling let your heart not exult,  
<sup>18</sup>Lest the Lord see and be displeased,  
And turn his anger away from him.  
**20** <sup>22</sup>Say not, 'I will be revenged for a wrong';  
Wait for the Lord, he will save you.
- Ingratitude**      **17** <sup>13</sup>He who returns evil for good,  
From his house evil shall not depart.
- Contention**      **3** <sup>30</sup>Strive not with a man without cause,  
If he has done you no harm.  
**30** <sup>32</sup>If you have foolishly exalted yourself  
And cherished designs, hand on mouth!<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>33</sup>For pressing milk brings out curd,  
And pressing the nose brings out blood,  
And pressing anger brings out strife.<sup>c</sup>  
**20** <sup>3</sup>It is an honor for a man to shun strife;  
Only a fool<sup>d</sup> is quarrelsome.  
**26** <sup>17</sup>A man seizing a dog by the ears  
Is one excited over<sup>e</sup> a quarrel not his own.  
**17** <sup>19</sup>A lover of transgression is a lover of strife;  
He who makes high his door invites a breach.

<sup>a</sup> 28<sup>8</sup> *I. e.*, those who take advantage of the poor shall lose their wealth, but the charitable shall prosper.

<sup>b</sup> 30<sup>32</sup> Both text and meaning of this verse are doubtful.

<sup>c</sup> 30<sup>33</sup> Heb. has a play on the words *nose* and *anger*, which are alike in sound and in derivation.

<sup>d</sup> 20<sup>3</sup> Lit., *But every fool*.

<sup>e</sup> 26<sup>17</sup> Syr., Lat., *mixing in*. This involves the transposition of two letters and a different proposition in the Heb., but may be original. In the first line Gk. reads *tail* instead of *ears*.

## EVILS TO AVOID

- 22 <sup>10</sup>Cast out a scoffer, and strife goes out,  
And discord and insult cease.
- 18 <sup>6</sup>A fool's lips lead him<sup>f</sup> into strife,  
And his mouth cries out for stripes.
- 26 <sup>21</sup>Charcoal for embers, and wood for fire,  
And a quarrelsome man to kindle strife!
- 17 <sup>14</sup>The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water,  
Therefore leave off contention before quarrelling begins.  
<sup>1</sup>Better a dry crust with quietness  
Than a house full of feasting with strife.<sup>g</sup>
- 27 <sup>14</sup>When one blesses his neighbor loudly<sup>h</sup> and zealously,<sup>i</sup> Flattery  
It is credited to him as a curse.
- 29 <sup>5</sup>A man who flatters his neighbor  
Spreads out a net for his feet.
- 26 <sup>28</sup>A lying tongue hates those crushed by it,<sup>j</sup>  
And a flattering<sup>k</sup> mouth works ruin.
- 28 <sup>23</sup>He who reproves<sup>l</sup> will find more favor  
Than he who flatters with his tongue.
- 26 <sup>23</sup>Like silver dross<sup>m</sup> plated on an earthen vessel Dissimu-  
lation  
Are fervent<sup>n</sup> lips with an evil heart.  
<sup>24</sup>With his lips one who hates disguises himself,  
But he holds<sup>o</sup> deceit in his bosom.  
<sup>25</sup>When he makes his voice gracious, trust him not,  
For there are seven abominations in his heart.  
<sup>26</sup>Though he cover<sup>p</sup> his hatred with guile,  
His wickedness will be revealed in the assembly.  
<sup>27</sup>He who digs a pit shall fall into it,  
And he who rolls a stone shall be crushed.<sup>q</sup>
- 14 <sup>5</sup>A reliable witness will not lie, Lying  
But a false witness utters lies.
- 13 <sup>5</sup>A just man hates anything false,  
But a bad man acts shamefully and disgracefully.

<sup>f</sup> 18<sup>6</sup> So Gk., Targ., and a slightly emended or freely rendered Heb. (lit., *come*).

<sup>g</sup> 17<sup>14</sup> Lit., *he sacrifices of strife*. Sacrifices and feasting went together in ancient Israel (cf. *e. p.*, I Sam. 9<sup>12-13</sup>).

<sup>h</sup> 27<sup>14</sup> Lit., *with a great voice*.

<sup>i</sup> 27<sup>14</sup> Lit., *in the morning rising early*. Some consider these words (wholly or in part) secondary, as the line is very long.

<sup>j</sup> 26<sup>28</sup> So apparently the Heb., if it means anything. VSS., *hates a true one*, which makes very doubtful parallelism. Toy reads, *brings destruction*, but this requires rather drastic emendation of the Heb.

<sup>k</sup> 26<sup>28</sup> Lit., *smooth*.

<sup>l</sup> 28<sup>23</sup> Heb., *rebukes a man after me*. The word meaning *after me* is certainly corrupt. Gk., *rebukes the ways of a man*, which might have been either corrupted into the present text or derived from it. The general sense of the proverb is unaffected by this obscurity in detail.

<sup>m</sup> 26<sup>23</sup> Lit., *silver of dross*; i. e., the dross left by refining silver. This would be a cheap material for plating pottery and giving it a specious appearance like silver.

<sup>n</sup> 28<sup>23</sup> So Heb. Gk., *smooth*.

<sup>o</sup> 26<sup>24</sup> Lit., *puts*.

<sup>p</sup> 26<sup>26</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. as suggested by the VSS.

<sup>q</sup> 26<sup>27</sup> Lit., *it will come back to him*.

## MAN

- 12 <sup>19</sup>A true lip shall be established forever,  
But a false tongue is but for a moment.<sup>r</sup>  
25 <sup>14</sup>Clouds and wind and no rain,—  
So is the man who boasts of gifts ungiven.<sup>a</sup>  
20 <sup>17</sup>Sweet to a man is bread gained by fraud,  
But later his mouth will be filled with gravel.  
26 <sup>28</sup>A lying tongue hates those crushed by it,  
And a flattering mouth works ruin.<sup>t</sup>

Breach  
of con-  
fidence

- 11 <sup>13</sup>One who gossips<sup>u</sup> gives away secrets,<sup>v</sup>  
But a trustworthy soul<sup>w</sup> hides a matter.  
20 <sup>19</sup>One who gossips gives away secrets,  
So avoid<sup>x</sup> him who opens his lips.

Treachery

- 26 <sup>18</sup>Like a madman who hurls about  
Deadly firebrands and arrows  
<sup>19</sup>Is he who deceives his neighbor  
And says, 'I did it in sport.'  
13 <sup>2</sup>From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good,  
But the desire of the treacherous is violence.<sup>y</sup>

Slander

- 18 <sup>8</sup>A slanderer's words are like dainties:  
They go down to a man's inmost depths.<sup>z</sup>  
11 <sup>9</sup>With his mouth a godless man destroys his neighbor,  
But by knowledge the righteous are delivered.  
25 <sup>23</sup>As a north wind brings forth rain,  
So does a gossiping tongue<sup>a</sup> an angry face.  
26 <sup>20</sup>Without wood a fire goes out,  
And without a slanderer strife ceases.  
16 <sup>28</sup>A false man lets loose strife,  
And a slanderer separates friends.  
10 <sup>18</sup>One who conceals hatred is a liar,<sup>b</sup>  
But one who utters slander, he is a fool.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>r</sup> 12<sup>19</sup> Lit., *an eye-wink*.

<sup>a</sup> 25<sup>14</sup> Lit., *with a false gift*. The above rendering follows Toy.

<sup>t</sup> 28<sup>28</sup> V. s., notes <sup>i</sup> and <sup>k</sup> on this vs.

<sup>u</sup> 11<sup>18</sup> Lit., *goes about with slander*.

<sup>v</sup> 11<sup>13</sup> Lit., *intimacy*, and so *secret counsels*. The same word is used for *friendship* in 3<sup>22</sup> (v. i.).

<sup>w</sup> 11<sup>13</sup> Lit., *one faithful of spirit*.

<sup>x</sup> 20<sup>19</sup> Lit., *mix not yourself with* (as in colloquial Eng.).

<sup>y</sup> 13<sup>2</sup> So Heb., but the connection between the lines and the meaning of the whole are not clear. The word rendered *desire* means lit. *soul* and is so taken by Gk., Syr., Targ., with verbs meaning *perish* or *be snatched away* instead of the noun *violence*. Instead of *eats*, Syr., Targ., Lat., and seven Heb. MSS. have *is satisfied*, as in 12<sup>14</sup>, where Syr. also reads, *a good man*. Cf. also 18<sup>26</sup>, § 57. Possibly the original read:

*A good man shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth,  
But the treacherous soul shall eat violence.*

<sup>z</sup> 18<sup>8</sup> Lit., *the chambers of the belly*.

<sup>a</sup> 25<sup>23</sup> Lit., *tongue of secrecy*.

<sup>b</sup> 10<sup>18</sup> Lit., *lips of falsehood*.

<sup>c</sup> 10<sup>18</sup> I. e., slander is not only sinful (like deception), but foolish. The Heb. conjunction may mean either *and* or *but*; it is here generally taken in the former sense, but the emphatic *he* of the second line favors the view that a contrast is intended.

## EVILS TO AVOID

- 3** <sup>29</sup>Plan not evil against your neighbor,  
The man who trustingly lives beside you.
- 16** <sup>27</sup>A worthless man plots<sup>d</sup> evil,  
And on his lips is a scorching fire.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>30</sup>One who shuts his eyes to form wicked plans,  
One who closes his lips, accomplishes evil.<sup>f</sup>
- 10** <sup>10</sup>One who winks his eye will make trouble,  
And a talkative fool will be overthrown.<sup>g</sup>
- 6** <sup>12</sup>A depraved man, a bad character,<sup>h</sup>  
Goes about making false statements,<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>13</sup>Winks with his eyes, scrapes with his feet,  
Makes signs with his fingers,  
<sup>14</sup>Devises crooked schemes in his mind,  
Always sows the seed of discord.<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>Therefore calamity shall suddenly overtake him;  
In an instant he shall be crushed without remedy.
- 24** <sup>8</sup>One who plans to do evil  
Shall be called a schemer.<sup>k</sup>
- 15** <sup>26</sup>Wicked plans are abhorrent to the Lord,  
But pleasant words are pure.<sup>l</sup>
- 22** <sup>22</sup>Rob not the poor because they are poor,  
Nor oppress the poor at the city gate,  
<sup>23</sup>For the Lord will plead their cause,  
And rob those who deprive them of life.<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>Remove not an ancient landmark  
Which your fathers made.
- 23** <sup>10</sup>Remove not an ancient landmark,<sup>n</sup>  
And enter not the fields of the fatherless.

Evil  
machina-  
tions

Oppres-  
sion of  
the poor

<sup>d</sup> 16<sup>27</sup> Lit., *digs*, as one digs a pit.

<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>27</sup> Heb., *like* (or *as it were*) a scorching fire, referring to the false speech by which he puts his plans into execution.

<sup>f</sup> 16<sup>30</sup> So Heb. If the text is sound, the meaning must be, Beware of the man who does not talk about his plans. Gk. has a somewhat different text and adds a third line, *He is a furnace of wickedness*.

<sup>g</sup> 10<sup>10</sup> So Heb. Gk., *One who boldly reproves will make peace*. Possibly this reproduces the original text, the Heb. reading having been copied by mistake from vs. <sup>8</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> 6<sup>12</sup> Lit., *man of iniquity*.

<sup>i</sup> 6<sup>13</sup> Lit., *in crookedness of mouth*.

<sup>j</sup> 6<sup>14</sup> Emending and rearranging the Heb., which has three lines:

*Has crooked schemes in his mind,  
Devises evil always,  
Sows discord.*

The word for *seed* is formed by prefixing one letter to the word for *evil*. The word translated *sows* (lit., *sends out, releases*) is nowhere, however, applied to literal seed-sowing. Its use with *discord* (or *strife*) is characteristic of Pr. (cf. vs. <sup>19</sup>, 16<sup>28</sup>).

<sup>k</sup> 24<sup>8</sup> Lit., *master* (Heb., *baal*) of schemes.

<sup>l</sup> 15<sup>26</sup> Cf. note on this vs. under § 14.

<sup>m</sup> 22<sup>22</sup> Cf. notes on these vs. under § 15.

<sup>n</sup> 23<sup>10</sup> Toy, for the sake of the parallelism, emends to read, *the widow's landmark*. Possible confirmation of this reading has been found in the fact that the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. Introd., p. 15) contains the sentence, *Seize not the widow's landmark*.

# MAN

<sup>11</sup>For their Champion<sup>o</sup> is strong;  
He will take their part<sup>p</sup> against you.

**12** <sup>6</sup>The words of the wicked are an ambush for blood,  
But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.

**16** <sup>29</sup>A violent man entices his neighbor  
And leads him in a way that is not good.

**29** <sup>10</sup>Bloody men hate the perfect man,  
And wicked<sup>a</sup> men seek his life.

**28** <sup>28</sup>When the wicked rise men hide themselves,  
But when they perish the righteous multiply.

**3** <sup>31</sup>Do not envy a violent man,  
And do not choose any of his ways,  
<sup>32</sup>For the perverted man is abhorrent to the Lord,  
But his friendship is with the upright.

**1** <sup>10</sup>My son, if sinners entice you,  
Do not consent;

<sup>11</sup>If they say, 'Come along with us,  
Let us lay wait for blood,'  
Let us lie in ambush for the innocent without cause,<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Like Sheol let us swallow them alive,  
And whole like those who go down to the pit.

<sup>13</sup>All precious wealth we shall find,  
We shall fill our houses with booty;

<sup>14</sup>Throw<sup>t</sup> in your lot among us,  
Let there be one purse for all of us!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>15</sup>My son, do not walk in the way with them;  
Keep your feet from their paths.<sup>u</sup>

<sup>17</sup>For in vain is the spreading of a net  
In the sight of any winged creature,<sup>v</sup>

<sup>18</sup>And these men lay wait for their own blood,  
They lie in ambush for their own lives.

<sup>19</sup>Such are the ways<sup>w</sup> of every plunderer;  
Plunder<sup>x</sup> takes the life of its possessors.

<sup>o</sup> 23<sup>11</sup> Heb., *Goel*, the avenger of blood and kinsman-redeemer; cf. Dt. 19<sup>6</sup>, 12, Ruth 3<sup>9</sup>, 12-13, Job 19<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> 23<sup>11</sup> Lit., *strive their strife*.

<sup>q</sup> 29<sup>10</sup> Heb., *upright*, but this is impossible unless the verb be changed, and only a slight emendation is required to secure the meaning given above.

<sup>a</sup> 1<sup>11</sup> By a slight emendation some commentators read, *the perfect man*, in order to have a closer parallel to the next line.

<sup>v</sup> 1<sup>11</sup> Naturally the sinners would not say that they were acting without cause. The writer is expressing his own judgment of the act rather than quoting exactly what would be said. The word meaning *without cause* makes the line long and is considered secondary by some scholars, but the length and arrangement of the lines in this and the preceding vs. are at best uncertain, and it is hard to see why the word should have been added.

<sup>t</sup> 1<sup>14</sup> So Gk., Lat., Syr., Targ. Heb., *you will throw*.

<sup>u</sup> 1<sup>15</sup> Is. 59<sup>7a</sup> has been inserted here and is counted as vs. 1<sup>6</sup>. It reads:

*For their feet run to evil  
And make haste to shed blood.*

This is omitted by the best Gk. MSS.

<sup>v</sup> 1<sup>17</sup> Lit., *possessor of a wing*.

<sup>w</sup> 1<sup>19</sup> Lit., *paths*; or, emending slightly, *Such is the end*.

<sup>x</sup> 1<sup>19</sup> In the Heb. this is implied as the subject of the verb, the end of the preceding line being lit., *plunderer of plunder*.



## VIRTUES TO CHERISH

§ 55. Virtues to Cherish, Pr. 21<sup>15, 3, 29<sup>27</sup>, 10<sup>32</sup>, 11, 20-21, 12<sup>5</sup>, 15<sup>28</sup>, 11<sup>30</sup>, 12<sup>12</sup>, 28<sup>12</sup>, 27<sup>10</sup>, 25<sup>19</sup>, 17<sup>17</sup>, 24<sup>10-12</sup>, 17<sup>9</sup>, 25<sup>20</sup>, 23<sup>9</sup>, 26<sup>5, 1, 8</sup>, 25<sup>11</sup>, 24<sup>26</sup>, 15<sup>4</sup>, 16<sup>21</sup>, 12<sup>12</sup>, 15<sup>1</sup>, 16<sup>24</sup>, 12<sup>26</sup>, 32<sup>7-28</sup>, 21<sup>26</sup>, 19<sup>6</sup>, 11<sup>25-26</sup>, 14<sup>21</sup>, 19<sup>17</sup>, 17<sup>5</sup>, 11<sup>17</sup>, 31<sup>6-7</sup>, 33<sup>4</sup>, 10<sup>12</sup>, 15<sup>17</sup>, 24<sup>29</sup>, 25<sup>21-22</sup></sup>

**Pr. 21** <sup>15</sup>It is joy to a righteous man to do justice,  
But destruction to those who do wrong.  
<sup>3</sup>To do what is just and right  
Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Strict  
justice

**29** <sup>27</sup>Abhorrent to the righteous is a vicious man,<sup>y</sup>  
And abhorrent to the wicked is one upright in his way.

Upright-  
ness

**10** <sup>32</sup>A righteous man's lips know<sup>a</sup> what is pleasant,  
But the mouth of the wicked what is false.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>A fountain of life is a righteous man's mouth,  
But wicked men's mouths are covered with violence.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Choice silver is a righteous man's tongue,  
But wicked men's minds are worthless.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>21</sup>A righteous man's lips feed many,  
But fools, for want of intelligence, die.

**12** <sup>9</sup>The plans of righteous men are just;<sup>d</sup>  
The designs of wicked men are deceitful.<sup>e</sup>

**15** <sup>28</sup>A righteous man's mind considers how to answer,<sup>f</sup>  
But wicked men's mouths pour out evil things.

**11** <sup>30</sup>The fruit of righteousness<sup>g</sup> is a tree of life,  
But violence<sup>h</sup> is a taker of lives.

**12** <sup>12</sup>A wicked man desires the net of evil men,  
But the root of righteous men yields fruit.<sup>i</sup>

**28** <sup>12</sup>When righteous men rejoice, great is the glory,  
But when wicked men rise, men are sought out.<sup>j</sup>

**27** <sup>10</sup>Your friend, and your father's friend, forsake not;  
Better is a neighbor near at hand than a brother far away.<sup>k</sup>

Fidelity  
in friend-  
ship

§ 55 Here we have commended the practical virtues of the good neighbor and citizen. Characteristically there is nothing heroic about the teaching of the sages, yet our myriad woes would be much lighter and fewer if these qualities were more common among us.

<sup>y</sup> 29<sup>27</sup> Lit., *man of iniquity*.

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>32</sup> Some MSS. read, *feed on*. Hitzig, followed by Toy, emends to read, *utter*.

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>32</sup> The current interpretation inserts *is*, but the parallelism is closer if we supply (in thought) the verb expressed in the preceding line.

<sup>b</sup> 10<sup>11</sup> Lit., *violence covers*.

<sup>c</sup> 10<sup>20</sup> Lit., *as a little*.

<sup>d</sup> 12<sup>5</sup> Lit., *justice*.

<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>5</sup> Lit., *deceit*.

<sup>f</sup> 15<sup>28</sup> Gk., Syr., Targ., *considers faithfulness*.

<sup>g</sup> 11<sup>30</sup> So Gk. Heb., *a righteous man*.

<sup>h</sup> 11<sup>30</sup> Slightly emending the Heb. (*a wise man*) as suggested by the Gk. The current rendering, *he that is wise winneth souls*, is unjustified.

<sup>i</sup> 12<sup>12</sup> Lit., *gives*, the object being unexpressed. The text and meaning of this verse are quite uncertain, and the renderings of the VSS. vary considerably.

<sup>j</sup> 28<sup>12</sup> Or *mankind is searched*. This is usually taken to mean that men must be searched for because they have gone into hiding, but the interpretation is uncertain. Toy emends so as to read:

*When the righteous are exalted there is great confidence,  
But when the wicked come into power men hide themselves.*

<sup>k</sup> 27<sup>10</sup> Cf. note on this proverb under § 33.

# MAN

- 25 <sup>19</sup>A bad<sup>1</sup> tooth and a slipping<sup>m</sup> foot,—  
Such is a faithless man's hope<sup>n</sup> in the day of trouble.  
17 <sup>17</sup>A friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.

Courage  
in deliv-  
ering the  
innocent

- 24 <sup>10</sup>If you weaken when you are in straits,<sup>o</sup>  
Straightened is your strength!  
<sup>11</sup>Deliver those who are taken to death,  
And restrain those who are tottering to slaughter.  
<sup>12</sup>If you say, 'I<sup>p</sup> did not know this,'  
Does the Weigher of hearts not perceive?  
Does the Watcher<sup>q</sup> of your soul not know  
And requite man according to his work?

Charity  
toward  
another's  
faults

Consider-  
ation for  
another's  
feelings

Wisdom  
in treat-  
ing with  
a fool

- 17 <sup>9</sup>He who covers up a transgression seeks love,  
But he who repeats gossip<sup>r</sup> estranges his friend.  
25 <sup>20</sup>Like vinegar on a wound  
Is a song on a troubled heart.<sup>s</sup>

- 23 <sup>9</sup>Do not speak into the ears of a fool,  
For he will despise the good sense of your words.  
26 <sup>6</sup>Answer a fool according to his folly,  
Lest he become wise in his own opinion.<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>As snow in summer or rain in harvest,  
So unfitting is honor for a fool.  
<sup>8</sup>Like one who ties a stone in a sling<sup>u</sup>  
Is he who gives honor to a fool.

Tact in  
speaking

- 25 <sup>14</sup>A word<sup>v</sup> fitly<sup>w</sup> spoken  
Is like golden fruit in silver settings.  
24 <sup>26</sup>He kisses the lips  
Who gives an honest answer.  
15 <sup>4</sup>The healing of the tongue<sup>x</sup> is a tree of life,  
But crookedness in it<sup>y</sup> breaks the spirit.<sup>z</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 25<sup>19</sup> Slightly emending the Heb. as suggested by the VSS.

<sup>m</sup> 25<sup>19</sup> Changing the vowels to read the active instead of the passive participle.

<sup>n</sup> 25<sup>19</sup> *I. e.*, that in which he trusts, be it money, violence, or fraud.

<sup>o</sup> 24<sup>10</sup> *Lit.*, in the day of straits (or distress). The above rendering attempts to reproduce the word-play of the Heb. The meaning seems to be that strength which cannot stand a real test is not entitled to be called strength.

<sup>p</sup> 24<sup>12</sup> *So Gk. Heb., we.*

<sup>q</sup> 24<sup>12</sup> The Heb. word, like the Eng., may indicate either protection, restraint, or observation. Here, as in Job 7<sup>20</sup>, it suggests that God keeps strict account of every man's conduct.

<sup>r</sup> 17<sup>9</sup> *Lit.*, repeats with a thing (or word).

<sup>s</sup> 25<sup>20</sup> One guess is as good as another in this vs. Heb. is certainly corrupt, and so, in all probability, was the very different text reflected in the Gk. The above rendering combines parts of both Gk. and Heb., omitting the rest as unintelligible.

<sup>t</sup> 26<sup>6</sup> *Lit.*, eyes.

<sup>u</sup> 26<sup>8</sup> *I. e.*, so that it cannot be shot out.

<sup>v</sup> 25<sup>11</sup> Transposing the lines.

<sup>w</sup> 25<sup>11</sup> *So Sym.* The meaning of the Heb. is uncertain.

<sup>x</sup> 15<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, soothing words.

<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, in the tongue, referring to perverse speech.

<sup>z</sup> 15<sup>4</sup> *Lit.*, is a breaking of the spirit.

## VIRTUES TO CHERISH

- 16 <sup>21</sup>A wise man is called discerning,  
And sweet speech<sup>a</sup> increases persuasiveness.

- 12 <sup>18</sup>One may thoughtlessly speak<sup>b</sup> like sword-thrusts,  
But a wise man's tongue<sup>c</sup> is healing.

Kind  
words

- 15 <sup>1</sup>A mild answer turns away wrath,  
But a harsh word stirs up anger.

- 16 <sup>24</sup>Pleasant words are like honeycomb,  
Sweet to the taste<sup>d</sup> and healing to the body.<sup>e</sup>

- 12 <sup>26</sup>A righteous man searches out his neighbor,<sup>f</sup>  
But the way of the wicked misleads them.

Helpful-  
ness

- 3 <sup>27</sup>Refuse not a service to your neighbor<sup>g</sup>  
When it is in your power to do it.

Liberality

- <sup>28</sup>Say not to your neighbor, 'Go, and come again,  
And to-morrow I will give, when I<sup>h</sup> have it by me.'<sup>h</sup>

- 21 <sup>26</sup>All day long a wicked man<sup>i</sup> covets,<sup>j</sup>  
But a righteous man gives and withholds not.

- 19 <sup>6</sup>Many seek the favor of a noble<sup>k</sup> man,  
And every man is a friend to one who gives.

- 11 <sup>25</sup>The liberal man<sup>l</sup> shall be prospered,<sup>m</sup>  
He who waters shall himself be watered.

- <sup>29</sup>The people curse him who withholds grain,<sup>n</sup>  
But blessing is on the head of him who sells it.

- 14 <sup>21</sup>He sins who despises his neighbor,  
He is happy who pities the poor.

- 19 <sup>17</sup>He who pities the poor lends to the Lord,  
And he will repay him for his good deed.

- 17 <sup>5</sup>He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;  
He who is glad at calamity will not be unpunished.

Mercy

<sup>a</sup> 16<sup>21</sup> Lit., *sweetness of lips*.

<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>18</sup> Lit., *There is one who speaks thoughtlessly*.

<sup>c</sup> 12<sup>18</sup> Lit., *the tongue of wise men*.

<sup>d</sup> 16<sup>24</sup> Lit., *soul*, but the word has a wide range of meaning.

<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>24</sup> Lit., *bone*.

<sup>f</sup> 12<sup>26</sup> So, lit., Heb., but the meaning is obscure and the text doubtful. The VSS. and commentators vary widely in their interpretations.

<sup>g</sup> 3<sup>27</sup> Emending the Heb. as demanded by the context.

<sup>h</sup> 3<sup>28</sup> Heb., *you*. If this is correct, we may read,

*Say not to your neighbor, 'Go and come again,'  
And 'To-morrow I will give,' when you have it by you.*

<sup>i</sup> 21<sup>26</sup> So Gk. and the implication of the parallelism. Heb. has no subject. The meaning is that a bad man is always wanting something for himself, while a good man is always giving to others.

<sup>j</sup> 21<sup>26</sup> Heb., *desires desire*. Probably a scribe's carelessness is responsible for this meaningless repetition and the omission of the subject.

<sup>k</sup> 19<sup>6</sup> The word may indicate either character or rank. Here, judging by the parallelism, it refers to generosity.

<sup>l</sup> 11<sup>25</sup> Lit., *soul of blessing*.

<sup>m</sup> 11<sup>25</sup> Lit., *made fat*.

<sup>n</sup> 11<sup>25</sup> *I. e.*, to raise the price, a practice common in all lands and ages.

## MAN

- 11 <sup>17</sup>A kind man does good to himself,  
A cruel man harms himself.<sup>o</sup>  
31 <sup>6</sup>Give strong drink to one who is perishing,  
And wine to the bitter in soul;  
<sup>7</sup>Let him drink and forget his poverty  
And remember his trouble no more.  
3 <sup>3</sup>Let not love and truth leave you,  
Bind them about your neck;<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>So you will enjoy favor and a good reputation<sup>q</sup>  
In the sight of God and man.

Love

- 10 <sup>12</sup>Hatred stirs up strife,  
But love overlooks all faults.  
15 <sup>17</sup>Better a dish of herbs where love is,  
Than a fatted ox with hate.

Kindness  
toward  
an enemy

- 24 <sup>29</sup>Say not: 'I will do to him as he did to me,  
I will pay back the man for his deed.'  
25 <sup>21</sup>If your enemy hungers, give him food;  
If he thirsts, give him water to drink;  
<sup>22</sup>For you will heap coals of fire on his head,  
And the Lord will reward you.

## K

### MAN'S DUTY TO GOD

§ 56. Religious Virtues, Pr. 9<sup>10</sup>, 15<sup>33</sup>, 14<sup>3</sup>, 23<sup>15-19</sup>, 14<sup>26-27</sup>, 10<sup>27</sup>, 19<sup>23</sup>, 37<sup>3</sup>, 22<sup>4</sup>, 19<sup>3</sup>,  
31<sup>11-12</sup>, 29<sup>18</sup>, 13<sup>13</sup>, 3<sup>9-10</sup>, 29<sup>25</sup>, 16<sup>20</sup>, 28<sup>25-26</sup>, 3<sup>5-6</sup>

Rever-  
ence:  
What  
it is

- 9 <sup>10</sup>The beginning of wisdom is reverence for the Lord,  
And knowledge of the Holy One<sup>a</sup> is understanding.  
15 <sup>33</sup>Reverence for the Lord is the result of wise instruction,<sup>b</sup>  
And before honor goes humility.  
14 <sup>2</sup>He who walks uprightly reveres the Lord,  
But he who is crooked in his ways despises him.

<sup>o</sup> 11<sup>17</sup> Heb. has *his soul* in the first line and *his flesh* in the second, but the words do not imply such a contrast as their Eng. equivalents suggest. They were used almost interchangeably to denote the whole person.

<sup>p</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> Heb. adds, *Write them on the tablet of your mind*, which is omitted by some Gk. MSS. and seems to have been added by mistake from 7<sup>2</sup>. A scribe writing from memory may have confused the two passages.

<sup>q</sup> 3<sup>4</sup> Lit., *name*, slightly emending the Heb., which reads, *understanding*.

**Man's Duty to God.**—While the sages have not the religious passion of the prophets, their whole philosophy of life is rooted in sincere and simple piety. The expression, *reverence for the Lord* (lit., *fear of the Lord*), is regularly used where we should say *religion*.

§ 56 These proverbs reflect a conception of God and of man's relation to him which is essentially the same as that of the N.T.

<sup>a</sup> 9<sup>10</sup> Heb. may be read, *of holy men*, and is so taken by several VSS. and commentators. The parallelism, however, favors the above rendering.

<sup>b</sup> 15<sup>33</sup> Lit., *is the instruction of wisdom*.

## RELIGIOUS VIRTUES

- 23** <sup>15</sup>My son, if you<sup>c</sup> are wise,  
 I too, I shall be glad;<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>Happy shall I be,<sup>e</sup>  
 When your lips speak righteously.<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>Do not envy sinners,  
 But always revere the Lord;  
<sup>18</sup>Assuredly the end is not yet,<sup>g</sup>  
 And your hope will not be cut off.  
<sup>19</sup>Listen, my son, and be wise,  
 And walk in the way of prudence.<sup>h</sup>
- 14** <sup>26</sup>He who reveres the Lord<sup>i</sup> has good reason to be confident,<sup>j</sup>  
 And his children will have a refuge.  
<sup>27</sup>Reverence for the Lord is a fountain of life,  
 To avoid the snares of death.
- 10** <sup>27</sup>Reverence for the Lord prolongs life,<sup>k</sup>  
 But the years of the wicked will be shortened.
- 19** <sup>28</sup>Reverence for the Lord leads<sup>l</sup> to life,  
 He who hopes in him<sup>m</sup> will not suffer harm.<sup>n</sup>
- 3** <sup>7</sup>Be not wise in your own eyes;  
 Revere the Lord and turn from sin.  
<sup>8</sup>Then you will have health of body<sup>o</sup>  
 And your bones will be refreshed.
- 22** <sup>4</sup>The reward of humility and reverence for the Lord  
 Is riches and honor and life.
- 19** <sup>3</sup>A man's folly brings ruin upon him,<sup>p</sup>  
 And then he<sup>q</sup> rages against the Lord.
- 3** <sup>11</sup>My son, reject not the discipline of the Lord,  
 And do not spurn his reproof,  
<sup>12</sup>For whom he loves he reproves,  
 Even as a father the son in whom he delights.<sup>r</sup>
- 29** <sup>18</sup>When there is no vision,<sup>s</sup> the people are unrestrained,  
 But he who keeps the teaching<sup>t</sup> is happy.

Its  
rewards

Submis-  
sion

Regard  
for re-  
ligious  
teaching

<sup>a</sup> 23<sup>15</sup> Lit., *your heart* (i. e., mind).

<sup>d</sup> 23<sup>15</sup> Lit., *My heart will rejoice, even I.*

<sup>e</sup> 23<sup>16</sup> Lit., *And my kidneys will be joyful.* The Hebrews regarded the kidneys and bowels as the organs of emotion and the heart as the organ of the intellect.

<sup>f</sup> 23<sup>16</sup> Lit., *upright things.*

<sup>g</sup> 23<sup>18</sup> Lit., *there is an after-part (issue, end).* Toy translates, *There is a future*, but this suggests the future life, which is not the meaning. Cf. Hab. 2<sup>3-4</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> 23<sup>19</sup> Revising the Heb. in the light of the context and other similar passages (cf. 4<sup>14</sup>, 9<sup>6</sup>).

<sup>i</sup> 14<sup>26</sup> Emending the Heb. as required by the context. Heb., *In reverence for the Lord is, etc.*, makes the second line refer to God's children, which is contrary to the usage of the book. The children of the righteous man must be meant (cf. 20<sup>7</sup>).

<sup>j</sup> 14<sup>26</sup> Lit., *has a strong* (ground or object of) *confidence.*

<sup>k</sup> 10<sup>27</sup> Lit., *adds days.*

<sup>l</sup> 19<sup>28</sup> Supplying the verb, which is not expressed in the Heb.

<sup>m</sup> 19<sup>28</sup> Adopting Toy's emendation of the obscure Heb.

<sup>n</sup> 19<sup>28</sup> Lit., *be visited with evil.*

<sup>o</sup> 3<sup>7</sup> So Gk. and a slightly revised Heb.

<sup>p</sup> 19<sup>3</sup> Lit., *ruins his way.*

<sup>q</sup> 19<sup>3</sup> Lit., *his heart.*

<sup>r</sup> 3<sup>12</sup> On this vs. cf. notes <sup>k</sup>, <sup>l</sup> under § 22.

<sup>s</sup> 29<sup>18</sup> Gk., *interpreter.* Since Pr. does not elsewhere refer to prophetic vision and the parallelism suggests something connected with the teaching of the wise, it is not improbable that the Gk. is closer to the original text than the Heb.

<sup>t</sup> 29<sup>18</sup> The Heb. word *Torah* does not have in this book its technical meaning, *the Law.*



## MAN

- 13** <sup>13</sup>He who despises the word is a debtor to it,<sup>u</sup>  
But he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

Honor

- 3** <sup>9</sup>Honor the Lord with your wealth,  
With the best of all your income.  
<sup>10</sup>Then your barns will be filled with grain,<sup>v</sup>  
And your vats overflow with wine.

Trust

- 29** <sup>25</sup>Dread of man lays a snare,  
But he who trusts in the Lord is secure.<sup>w</sup>  
**16** <sup>20</sup>He who acts wisely as regards the word will prosper,<sup>x</sup>  
But he who trusts in the Lord is happy.  
**28** <sup>25</sup>A greedy man stirs up strife,  
But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.<sup>y</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>He who trusts in himself<sup>z</sup> is a fool,  
But he who walks wisely will be delivered.  
**3** <sup>7</sup>Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
Depend not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup>In all you do<sup>a</sup> know him intimately,<sup>b</sup>  
And he will direct your paths.

## L

### THE REWARDS OF HUMAN CONDUCT

§ 57. Man Shall Reap What He Sows, Pr. 11<sup>31</sup>, 12<sup>14</sup>, 11<sup>18</sup>, 22<sup>3</sup>, 5<sup>22-23</sup>, 18<sup>20</sup>, 28<sup>10</sup>,  
11<sup>3</sup>, 14<sup>14</sup>

- Pr. 11** <sup>31</sup>If the righteous man is requited on earth,  
How much more the wicked and the sinner!<sup>a</sup>  
**12** <sup>14</sup>From the fruit of a man's mouth he is satisfied with good,<sup>b</sup>  
And the work of man's hands will return to him.  
**11** <sup>18</sup>A wicked man earns deceitful wages,  
But he who sows righteousness has a true reward.  
**22** <sup>8</sup>He who sows iniquity will reap trouble,  
And the crop he has worked for<sup>c</sup> will fail.

<sup>u</sup> 13<sup>13</sup> *I. e.*, is under an obligation like that of a debtor who has given a pledge. Both text and meaning, however, are somewhat doubtful.

<sup>v</sup> 3<sup>10</sup> Revising the Heb., as suggested by the Gk.

<sup>w</sup> 29<sup>25</sup> Lit., *set up high* (*i. e.*, where he will be safe).

<sup>x</sup> 16<sup>20</sup> Lit., *find good*.

<sup>y</sup> 28<sup>25</sup> Lit., *be made fat*.

<sup>z</sup> 23<sup>26</sup> Lit., *in his heart* (or *mind*).

<sup>a</sup> 3<sup>7</sup> Lit., *in all your ways*.

<sup>b</sup> 3<sup>6</sup> Heb. reads simply, *know him*.

The Rewards of Human Conduct.—The teaching of the wise appeals constantly to prudential motives. The point of view is that of every-day experience and common sense.

§ 57 While further reflection (Ecc., Job) showed that life was not so simple as it seemed to the earlier sages, as a general rule it is true that every form of virtue or vice brings its own appropriate reward or punishment.

<sup>a</sup> 11<sup>31</sup> Gk. has quite a different text in this verse. It is quoted in I Pet. 4<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>14</sup> Cf. 13<sup>3</sup> and note <sup>y</sup> under § 54.

<sup>c</sup> 22<sup>8</sup> Lit., *the grain of his work*. This reading requires an emendation suggested in part by the Gk. Heb., *the rod of his wrath*.

# MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS

- 5 <sup>22</sup>His iniquities will take him,<sup>d</sup>  
 And in the cords of his sin will he be held.  
<sup>23</sup>He will die for lack of instruction,  
 And perish<sup>e</sup> through the greatness of his folly.  
 18 <sup>20</sup>From the fruit of a man's mouth his belly is satisfied;<sup>f</sup>  
 The increase of his lips satisfies him.  
 28 <sup>10</sup>He who misleads the upright in an evil way  
 Will fall into his own pit,  
 But the perfect will inherit good.  
 11 <sup>3</sup>The integrity of the upright shall guide them,  
 But the crookedness of the faithless shall ruin them.  
 14 <sup>14</sup>From his ways one of perverse mind is satisfied,  
 And so from his deeds<sup>g</sup> is a good man.

§ 58. Recompense for Right or Wrong Conduct, Pr. 14<sup>32</sup>, 13<sup>9</sup>, 10<sup>28</sup>, 24<sup>19-20</sup>, 28<sup>1</sup>, 4<sup>19</sup>, 18<sup>1</sup>, 28<sup>5</sup>, 14<sup>22</sup>, 19<sup>1</sup>, 18<sup>3</sup>, 12<sup>3</sup>, 10<sup>7</sup>, 6<sup>1</sup>, 21<sup>7</sup>, 13<sup>2</sup>, 10<sup>8</sup>, 12<sup>21</sup>, 26<sup>2</sup>, 11<sup>21</sup>, 28<sup>18</sup>, 14<sup>11</sup>, 29<sup>16</sup>, 21<sup>12</sup>, 13<sup>21</sup>, 17<sup>20</sup>, 15<sup>6</sup>, 13<sup>25</sup>, 12<sup>20</sup>, 29<sup>6</sup>, 10<sup>25</sup>, 24<sup>15-16</sup>, 10<sup>30</sup>, 12<sup>7</sup>, 22<sup>21-22</sup>, 10<sup>3</sup>, 24<sup>1</sup>, 11<sup>19</sup>, 10<sup>16</sup>, 12<sup>28</sup>, 10<sup>31</sup>, 28<sup>17</sup>, 10<sup>2</sup>, 11<sup>7</sup>, 15<sup>24</sup>, 12<sup>2</sup>, 19<sup>29</sup>, 11<sup>8</sup>, 21<sup>18</sup>, 13<sup>6</sup>, 14<sup>14</sup>, 21<sup>21</sup>

- Pr. 14 <sup>32</sup>The wicked stumble in adversity,  
 But a just man has hope when he dies.<sup>h</sup>  
 13 <sup>9</sup>The light of the righteous rejoices,<sup>i</sup>  
 But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.  
 10 <sup>28</sup>The hope of the righteous is joy,  
 But the expectation of the wicked will perish.  
 24 <sup>19</sup>Fret not yourself because of evil-doers,  
 Nor be envious of the wicked,  
<sup>20</sup>For there is no future<sup>j</sup> for the bad man,  
 The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

Hope or  
hopeless-  
ness

- 28 <sup>1</sup>The wicked flee when no one is pursuing,  
 But the righteous are bold as a lion.  
 4 <sup>19</sup>The way of the wicked is as darkness:  
 They know not at what they stumble.  
<sup>18</sup>But the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn,  
 Shining more and more brightly till full daylight.<sup>k</sup>

Moral  
courage  
or cow-  
ardice

<sup>d</sup> 5<sup>22</sup> Heb. adds, *the wicked man*. Since the verb already has an object (*him*), this is probably a marginal gloss.

<sup>e</sup> 5<sup>23</sup> Instead of this line Gk. has two lines, which seem to be simply variant readings of the Heb. One of them has *perish*, as above, and this is supported by the parallelism. Heb., *go astray*, makes an anticlimax.

<sup>f</sup> 18<sup>20</sup> Cf. 12<sup>14</sup>, above, and 13<sup>1</sup>, § 54.

<sup>g</sup> 14<sup>14</sup> Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, *from upon him*.

§ 58 While the rewards and punishments referred to in these proverbs are mostly external and temporal, the effects of conduct upon character itself are not ignored.

<sup>h</sup> 14<sup>19</sup> This seems to reflect a hope of a blessed hereafter, but the reading is uncertain. A slight emendation, supported by the Gk., gives the following:

*A wicked man is overthrown by his wickedness,  
 But a righteous man trusts in his integrity.*

<sup>i</sup> 13<sup>9</sup> Some commentators emend to read, *shines*.

<sup>j</sup> 24<sup>20</sup> Lit., *end (issue, after-part)*.

<sup>k</sup> 4<sup>18</sup> The exact meaning of this line is not certain: the VSS. and commentators give various interpretations. The general contrast between stumbling in darkness and walking securely by daylight, however, is quite clear.

# MAN

Moral  
percep-  
tion or  
blindness

- 28 <sup>5</sup>Evil men do not understand justice,  
But they who seek the Lord understand all.<sup>1</sup>

Truth or  
error

- 14 <sup>22</sup>Do not they go astray who plan evil?  
But kindness and faithfulness are for<sup>m</sup> those who plan good.

Honor or  
humilia-  
tion

- <sup>19</sup>Evil men bow before good men,  
And the wicked at the gates of a righteous man.  
18 <sup>3</sup>With the coming of the wicked comes also contempt,  
And with ignominy comes reproach.  
12 <sup>8</sup>According to his intelligence a man is praised,  
And a prejudiced<sup>n</sup> man will be despised.

Remem-  
brance or  
oblivion

- 10 <sup>7</sup>The memory of the just shall be blessed,  
But the name of the wicked shall rot.

Blessed-  
ness or  
violence

- <sup>6</sup>Blessings are on the head of the just,  
But grief<sup>o</sup> shall seal<sup>p</sup> the mouth of the wicked.  
21 <sup>7</sup>The violence of the wicked will sweep them away,  
Because they refuse to act justly.  
13 <sup>2</sup>From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good,  
But the desire of the treacherous is violence.<sup>q</sup>

Deliver-  
ance or  
misfor-  
tune

- 10 <sup>9</sup>He who lives uprightly lives securely,  
But he whose ways are crooked shall suffer.<sup>r</sup>  
12 <sup>21</sup>No trouble shall be sent to the righteous,  
But the wicked are full of misfortune.  
26 <sup>2</sup>Like the sparrow in its wandering, like the swallow in its flying,  
So a curse without cause will not fall.<sup>s</sup>  
11 <sup>21</sup>Most assuredly<sup>t</sup> the evil man will not go unpunished,  
But the seed of the righteous will be delivered.  
28 <sup>18</sup>One who walks uprightly will be saved,  
But one of crooked ways<sup>u</sup> will fall.<sup>v</sup>

Prosper-  
ity or  
calamity

- 14 <sup>11</sup>The house of the wicked will be destroyed,  
But the tent of the upright will flourish.

<sup>1</sup> 28<sup>s</sup> To us this proverb suggests the problem of God's justice, but the original meaning was probably that only those who seek to know God's will can perceive what is right.

<sup>m</sup> 14<sup>22</sup> Inserting the preposition, which is found in the Gk. and needed in the Heb.

<sup>n</sup> 12<sup>8</sup> Lit., *twisted in mind*.

<sup>o</sup> 10<sup>6</sup> So Gk. Heb., *violence*.

<sup>p</sup> 10<sup>6</sup> Lit., *cover*.

<sup>q</sup> 13<sup>2</sup> Cf. note <sup>v</sup> under § 54.

<sup>r</sup> 10<sup>9</sup> With Toy slightly emending the Heb., which reads, *shall be known*.

<sup>s</sup> 26<sup>2</sup> Lit., *come*; i. e., be accomplished.

<sup>t</sup> 11<sup>21</sup> Lit., *hand to hand*; i. e., I will give you my hand on it!

<sup>u</sup> 28<sup>18</sup> Lit., *crooked of ways*. As in vs. <sup>6</sup>, *ways* has the dual form (*two ways*), but the reason for this form and its significance in this connection are not clear.

<sup>v</sup> 28<sup>18</sup> Heb. adds, *in one*. Some take this to mean, *at once*, but this is doubtful. Others emend the phrase. Toy regards it as a gloss on the *two ways* of the Heb. text.

## RECOMPENSE FOR CONDUCT

- 29 <sup>16</sup>When the wicked increase,<sup>w</sup> crime increases,  
But the righteous will see their fall.
- 21 <sup>12</sup>A just man who considers the house of a wicked man  
Overturns the wicked to evil.<sup>x</sup>
- 13 <sup>21</sup>Misfortune pursues the sinners,  
But good fortune rewards the righteous.<sup>y</sup>
- 17 <sup>20</sup>A perverted<sup>a</sup> man finds no satisfaction,<sup>a</sup>  
And a double-tongued<sup>b</sup> man gets into trouble.

- 15 <sup>6</sup>In the house of the righteous is much treasure,  
But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.<sup>c</sup>

Riches or  
trouble

- 11 <sup>25</sup>A righteous man eats till his appetite is satisfied,  
But the belly of the wicked suffers want.

Plenty or  
want

- 12 <sup>20</sup>Deceit is in the mind of those who plan evil,  
But those who counsel peace have joy.

Joy or  
evil

- 29 <sup>6</sup>In his transgression an evil man is snared,<sup>d</sup>  
But a righteous man sings and rejoices.

- 10 <sup>25</sup>When the tempest passes, the wicked man is no more,  
But the righteous man is established forever.<sup>e</sup>

Stability  
or inse-  
curity

- 24 <sup>15</sup>Lie not in wait<sup>f</sup> against the home of the just,  
Do not rob the place where he rests;  
<sup>16</sup>For seven times the just falls and rises,  
But the wicked totter in ruin.

- 10 <sup>30</sup>A righteous man will never be removed,  
But the wicked will not inhabit the land.

- 12 <sup>7</sup>Wicked men are overthrown and are no more,  
But the house of the righteous will stand.

- 2 <sup>21</sup>For the upright will inhabit the land,  
And the perfect will remain in it;

- <sup>22</sup>But the wicked will be cut off from the land,  
And the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

- 10 <sup>3</sup>The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,  
But he disappoints the desire of the wicked.

Fulfil-  
ment of  
desires  
or fears

<sup>w</sup> 29<sup>16</sup> Some commentators emend, as in vs. <sup>2</sup> (cf. § 43), to read *rule*, or *come into power*. It is perhaps better here to assume that the word *increase* implies coming into power, for the repetition of the verb is probably intentional (cf. Ecc. 1<sup>19</sup>, 5<sup>11</sup>).

<sup>x</sup> 21<sup>12</sup> This does not make sense and can hardly be original, but none of the emendations which have been suggested is satisfactory. Possibly the original meant *Consigns the wicked to ruin* (cf. Job 5<sup>3</sup>).

<sup>y</sup> 13<sup>21</sup> Heb., *He rewards the righteous with good.*

<sup>a</sup> 17<sup>20</sup> Lit., *twisted in mind*.

<sup>b</sup> 17<sup>20</sup> Lit., *good*.

<sup>c</sup> 17<sup>20</sup> Lit., *turned in his tongue*.

<sup>d</sup> 15<sup>6</sup> Cf. note on this vs. under § 38.

<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>6</sup> Repointing the Heb. as read by Syr. and Targ. Heb., *in the transgression of an evil man is a snare*.

<sup>f</sup> 24<sup>15</sup> Lit., *an everlasting foundation*.

<sup>g</sup> 24<sup>15</sup> Heb. adds, *O wicked man*, but this is probably a gloss.

# MAN

<sup>24</sup>What the wicked man fears will come upon him,  
But what the righteous desire will be granted.<sup>z</sup>

Life or  
death

- 11 <sup>19</sup>True righteousness<sup>b</sup> leads<sup>i</sup> to life,  
But when one<sup>j</sup> pursues evil, it leads<sup>i</sup> to death.<sup>k</sup>  
10 <sup>16</sup>A righteous man's wage leads<sup>i</sup> to life,  
A wicked man's income to destruction.<sup>l</sup>  
12 <sup>28</sup>In the path of righteousness is life,  
But the way of evil<sup>m</sup> leads to<sup>n</sup> death.  
10 <sup>31</sup>A righteous man's mouth produces<sup>o</sup> wisdom,  
But a false tongue<sup>p</sup> will be cut off.  
28 <sup>17</sup>A man oppressed with the blood of a person  
Will flee to the pit; let them not seize him.<sup>q</sup>  
10 <sup>2</sup>Treasures unjustly acquired profit nothing,  
But righteousness delivers from death.  
11 <sup>7</sup>When a wicked man dies, his expectation perishes,  
And the hope of strength perishes.<sup>r</sup>  
15 <sup>24</sup>The upward way of life is for the wise man,  
That he may avoid Sheol below.

Divine  
favor or  
condem-  
nation

- 12 <sup>2A</sup>A good man will obtain favor from the Lord,  
But a designing man<sup>s</sup> he will condemn.  
19 <sup>29</sup>Rods<sup>t</sup> are prepared for scoffers  
And stripes for the backs of fools.

The  
wicked a  
ransom  
for the  
righteous

- 11 <sup>8</sup>The righteous man is rescued from trouble,  
And the wicked man takes his place.<sup>u</sup>  
21 <sup>18</sup>The wicked man is a ransom for the righteous,  
And the treacherous man for<sup>v</sup> the upright.

Right-  
eousness  
its own  
reward

- 13 <sup>6</sup>Righteousness preserves the man of integrity,<sup>w</sup>  
But wickedness overthrows the sinner.

<sup>s</sup> 10<sup>24</sup> Repointing the Heb. verb as passive.

<sup>b</sup> 11<sup>19</sup> So Heb., as interpreted by BDB. Many commentators, in the interest of closer parallelism, prefer to emend so as to read, *He who associates with (or follows after) righteousness.*

<sup>i</sup> 11<sup>19</sup>, 10<sup>16</sup> The verb is not expressed in the Heb.

<sup>j</sup> 11<sup>19</sup> Lit., *one who*.

<sup>k</sup> 11<sup>19</sup> Heb., *is death*, but not so the VSS.

<sup>l</sup> 10<sup>16</sup> Heb., *sin*; but the above reading, which requires only a slight emendation, gives better parallelism. The point of the verse is that wealth without character does more harm than good to its owner.

<sup>m</sup> 12<sup>28</sup> Heb. has after *way* another noun meaning *path*, but this does not make sense and must be a mistake for some word expressing a contrast to the righteousness of the preceding line.

<sup>n</sup> 12<sup>28</sup> Supplying the verb (which is not expressed in the Heb.) and by a change of one vowel restoring the preposition as in the VSS. and many Heb. MSS.

<sup>o</sup> 10<sup>31</sup> The Heb. word means lit., *bear fruit*.

<sup>p</sup> 10<sup>31</sup> Lit., *tongue of falsehood*.

<sup>q</sup> 28<sup>17</sup> The text and meaning of this vs. are uncertain. Toy conjectures that it is a quotation from a law-book, inserted here by mistake.

<sup>r</sup> 11<sup>17</sup> The text and meaning of this proverb are doubtful.

<sup>s</sup> 12<sup>2</sup> Lit., *a man of devices*.

<sup>t</sup> 19<sup>29</sup> So Gk. and a slightly revised Heb. The trad. text reads, *judgments*.

<sup>u</sup> 11<sup>8</sup> Lit., *comes instead of him*.

<sup>v</sup> 21<sup>18</sup> Lit., *instead of*.

<sup>w</sup> 13<sup>6</sup> Lit., *the perfect of way*.



## RECOMPENSE FOR CONDUCT

- 14<sup>a</sup> <sup>14</sup>From his ways one of perverse mind is satisfied,  
And so from his deeds<sup>a</sup> is a good man.  
21 <sup>21</sup>He who pursues righteousness and kindness  
Will find life<sup>a</sup> and honor.

### IV

#### NUMERICAL ENIGMAS

##### § 59. Four Classes of Evil-Doers, Pr. 30<sup>11-14</sup>

[There are three kinds of men whom the Lord hates,  
And four that are abhorrent to him:]

- Pr. 30 <sup>11</sup>Those<sup>a</sup> who curse their fathers  
And do not bless their mothers;  
<sup>12</sup>Those who are pure in their own eyes  
And are not cleansed of their filth;  
<sup>13</sup>Those whose eyes are—oh, how lofty!—  
And whose eyelids are upraised;  
<sup>14</sup>Those whose teeth are swords  
And their incisors<sup>b</sup> knives,  
To devour the poor from the earth  
And the needy from among men.

##### § 60. Four Things That Are Never Satisfied, Pr. 30<sup>15-18</sup>

- Pr. 30 <sup>15</sup>There are three things that are never satisfied,  
Four which do not say, 'Enough':  
<sup>16</sup>Sheol, the barren womb,  
The earth, not satisfied with water,  
And fire, which does not say, 'Enough.'

##### § 61. Four Things That Are Incomprehensible, Pr. 30<sup>18-19</sup>

- Pr. 30 <sup>18</sup>There are three things that are too wonderful for me,  
And four which I do not understand:

<sup>a</sup> 14<sup>a</sup> Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, *from upon him*.

<sup>b</sup> 21<sup>a</sup> Heb. inserts *righteousness*, doubtless through an error in copying.

**Numerical Enigmas.**—Regarding the possibility that some of the earliest proverbs were originally riddles, cf. *Introd.*, p. 14. In the case of these later and more elaborate compositions it is not likely that the original form was a question and an answer, but in any case the form is closely related to the enigma. For another example of the same type, cf. 6<sup>16-19</sup>, § 14.

§ 59 In this section the introductory statement (cf. vss. 15, 18, 21, 24, 29) is missing, but it is not unlikely that the original text contained such a statement, for the vss. do not form sentences in themselves, but simply name the four classes of evil-doers, thus falling into the same literary mould as the other groups which follow them. A conjectural introduction has therefore been supplied above in brackets, following the analogy of 6<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 30<sup>11</sup> Lit., *A generation*, and so throughout this section. Here, however, as often, the word signifies a general class rather than the men living at a particular time.

<sup>b</sup> 30<sup>14</sup> The Heb. word is simply a synonym for *teeth*.

§ 60 Heb. introduces this proverb with a line which no commentator has satisfactorily explained, and which is therefore omitted from the translation. It reads, lit., *The leech has two daughters, give, give*. It should be noted that this section simply records what a thoughtful man has observed; it has no moral teaching.

§ 61 Again we find observation rather than moral teaching. Cf. I Kgs. 4<sup>32-33</sup>. The vulture, serpent, and ship follow no roads or paths and leave no trace behind. Equally mysterious are the ways of lovers.

## MAN

<sup>19</sup>The way of a vulture in the heavens,  
The way of a serpent upon a rock,  
The way of a ship in the heart of the sea,  
And the way of a man with a maid.<sup>o</sup>

### § 62. Four Things That Are Intolerable, Pr. 30<sup>21-23</sup>

**Pr. 30** <sup>21</sup>Under three things the earth trembles,  
And under four it cannot bear up:  
<sup>22</sup>Under a servant when he becomes king,  
And a fool when he is satisfied with food,  
<sup>23</sup>Under an unpopular<sup>d</sup> woman when she gets married,  
And a maid who becomes heir to her mistress.

### § 63. Four Things Which, Though Small, Manifest Great Foresight, Pr. 30<sup>24-28</sup>

**Pr. 30** <sup>24</sup>There are four things which are small in the earth  
But wiser than the wise:<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>25</sup>The ants, a people not strong,  
Yet they prepare their food in the summer;  
<sup>26</sup>The badgers, a people not mighty,  
Yet they make their homes in the rocks;  
<sup>27</sup>The locusts have no king,  
Yet they all go out in companies;<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>The lizard you may seize in your hands,  
Yet she is in royal palaces.<sup>g</sup>

### § 64. Four Things Which Are Stately in Their Going, Pr. 30<sup>29-31</sup>

**Pr. 30** <sup>29</sup>There are three things of stately gait,  
And four which are stately in their walking:  
<sup>30</sup>The lion, mighty among the beasts,  
Who turns his back to<sup>h</sup> none;  
<sup>31</sup>The cock, strutting proudly;<sup>i</sup> the he-goat;  
And the king against whom there is no rising.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>o</sup> 30<sup>19</sup> The word used here is the one used in Is. 7<sup>14</sup>. It means, lit., a young woman, whether married or unmarried.

§ 62 The sage who in these proverbs sings, as it were, his litany has watched the world go by and enjoyed the spectacle with a keen but good-natured sense of humor.

<sup>d</sup> 30<sup>23</sup> Lit., *hated*.

§ 63 The joy of observing interesting things is the only motive of these as of the preceding vss., though it is easy enough to draw a moral from them.

<sup>e</sup> 30<sup>24</sup> Pointing the Heb. as it was read by the Gk., Syr., and Lat.

<sup>f</sup> 30<sup>27</sup> Lit., *dividing*; i. e., arranging themselves in regular divisions.

<sup>g</sup> 30<sup>28</sup> I. e., though apparently helpless, the lizard manages to make its way even into the closely guarded palace.

§ 64 Here something of the æsthetic interest appears in the pleasure of watching graceful, stately motion.

<sup>h</sup> 30<sup>30</sup> Lit., *turns from the face of*.

<sup>i</sup> 30<sup>31</sup> Heb., *that which is girded about the loins*. VSS., *the cock*. The word rendered *strutting proudly* is obtained (following Toy) by an emendation of the word for *loins*. Many other interpretations have been offered by ancient and modern commentators.

<sup>j</sup> 30<sup>31</sup> This reading is very doubtful, but none better has been proposed. The text is undoubtedly corrupt.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES



# THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

## I

### KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST FOR THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE

#### § 1. The Eternal Wheel of Things, Ecc. 1<sup>2-11</sup>

Ecc. 1

<sup>2</sup>Vanity<sup>a</sup> of vanities, says Koheleth,<sup>b</sup>  
Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

Vanity  
of human  
effort

<sup>3</sup>What gain has man from all his toil,  
Which he puts forth under the sun?<sup>c</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The generations come and go,  
But the earth remains forever.

<sup>5</sup>The sun rises and the sun sets,  
And comes hastening back to his rising place.<sup>d</sup>

Nature's  
endless  
cycles

<sup>6</sup>Round to the south and circling to the north,  
Circling, circling goes the wind,  
And on its circuits the wind returns.

<sup>7</sup>All the streams flow into the sea,  
And yet the sea is not full;  
To the place from which the streams flow,  
From there they flow again.

<sup>8</sup>All things are wearied with labor;  
No man is able to describe it;  
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
Nor is the ear filled with hearing.

Nothing  
brings  
lasting  
satisfac-  
tion

<sup>9</sup>What has been is what shall be,  
And what has been done is what shall be done;

**Koheleth's Vain Quest for the Real Values in Life.**—As has already been stated in the *Introd.*, pp. 17–21, the heart of the Book of Ecclesiastes comes from an ancient Jewish sage, who calls himself Koheleth. In a series of brilliant gnomic essays he discusses at length the value of those things for which men strive and the possibility of attaining happiness. At the very beginning he states his thesis: *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. To him all human struggle seems unsatisfying and fruitless. The first reason for this pessimistic conclusion is set forth in a weird poem, 1<sup>2-11</sup>. The author then passes over into half prose, half poetry. The whole discussion closes with a brilliant poem in which the young are urged to enjoy those pleasures which youth offers before palsying old age destroys all possibilities of enjoyment, 11<sup>12-12</sup>.

§ 1 In this section the reader feels throughout the weakness of old age. The matchless order and rhythm of nature, instead of inspiring awe and confidence in the divine Ruler, only intensify the author's overpowering *ennui*. Heb. prefixes the title: *The words of Koheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem* (cf. note on § 2 and *Introd.*, p. 7).

<sup>a</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> Lit., *breath* or *nothingness*. The word is used forty times by the author.

<sup>b</sup> 1<sup>2</sup> Possibly the words *says Koheleth* are secondary, for the author of the original sections usually speaks in the first rather than in the third person.

<sup>c</sup> 1<sup>3</sup> Another characteristic idiom. It is used by Koheleth twenty-five times. It refers to all terrestrial things.

<sup>d</sup> 1<sup>4</sup> The sun is thought of as animate and returning at night through the subterranean passage to the east, where it rises. For the same idea, cf. Vergil, *Georg.* I, 250. Also cf. II Kgs. 23<sup>11</sup> and Ps. 19<sup>6</sup>.



## \ KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST

There is nothing new under the sun.

<sup>10</sup>Is there anything of which it may be said,

‘See, this thing is new’?

Already it existed in preceding ages.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>11</sup>There is no remembrance of those who were earlier;

Also the men who shall be later

Shall not be remembered by those still later.

### § 2. The Futility of Those Things for Which Men Strive, Ecc. 1<sup>12-26</sup>

**Ecc. 1** <sup>12</sup>I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>And I applied my mind to searching out and exploring by wisdom all that is done under heaven. But it is a wretched task that God has given men as their occupation. <sup>14</sup>I have seen everything that is being done under the sun, and it is nothing but an illusion<sup>f</sup> and a chasing of the wind.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>15</sup>What is crooked cannot be made straight,

What is lacking can never be supplied.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>16</sup>I said to myself, <sup>i</sup>‘See, I have grown and attained more wisdom than all who were before me over Jerusalem, and my mind has gained a large vision of wisdom and knowledge.’ <sup>17</sup>When I carefully investigated<sup>j</sup> wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly,<sup>k</sup> I learned that this also is a pursuit of wind.

<sup>18</sup>For more wisdom brings more trouble,

And an increase of knowledge an increase of pain.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>I said to myself, ‘Come now, I will make a test of pleasure and of self-indulgence;’ but I found that this too was an illusion. <sup>2</sup>I said of laughter, ‘It is madness;’ and of pleasure, ‘What does it accomplish?’ <sup>3</sup>I found out how to stimulate<sup>l</sup> my body with wine—though my reason was always in control<sup>m</sup>—and how to indulge in folly, until I should discover whether this is a good way for men to spend all the days of their life on earth. <sup>4</sup>I undertook great enterprises; I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself; <sup>5</sup>I had gardens and parks laid out, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. <sup>6</sup>I had pools of water constructed to irrigate a forest of growing trees. <sup>7</sup>I bought male and female slaves and had others who were born in my house. I also had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all my predecessors in Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>Besides I amassed silver and gold and

<sup>o</sup> <sup>110</sup> With certain MSS. slightly correcting the Heb.

§ 2 In this section Koheleth cites his more personal experiences to prove that all human effort is vain. These experiences he presents under the assumed guise of Solomon, the Magnificent, who was also the traditional father of the wisdom school. By bitter experience Koheleth has found that all the things which men ordinarily regard as sources of happiness—knowledge, wisdom, gratification of the appetites and passions, the sense of power and achievement, and the possession of wealth—utterly fail to give abiding happiness.

<sup>f</sup> <sup>114</sup> The noun translated *illusion* here and in the remainder of the book is the one translated *vanity* in <sup>2</sup> (see note <sup>a</sup>).

<sup>g</sup> <sup>114</sup> *I. e.*, utterly futile. The meaning of the Heb. verb is doubtful, as it occurs only in Ecc. It may mean *feeding* or *longing for*.

<sup>h</sup> <sup>115</sup> The Heb. must be slightly revised as the context demands.

<sup>i</sup> <sup>116</sup> Lit., *communed with my soul*.

<sup>j</sup> <sup>117</sup> Lit., *I gave my mind to know*.

<sup>k</sup> <sup>117</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb.

<sup>l</sup> <sup>128</sup> Lit., *draw out*.

<sup>m</sup> <sup>28</sup> *I. e.*, keeping within the bounds of discretion.

## FUTILITY OF STRIVING

the treasures of kings and of provinces. I secured for myself male and female singers, and all that gives pleasure to men, including many concubines.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>9</sup>I became far richer than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem; and my wisdom, too, remained with me. <sup>10</sup>I withheld from myself nothing that I craved; I did not deny myself any pleasure, for I found enjoyment in all my toil, and this was the reward for all my effort. <sup>11</sup>But when I considered all that my hands had made, and what by toil I had accomplished, it all seemed but an illusion and a chasing of the wind. Nothing under the sun was worth while.

<sup>12</sup>Then I turned to investigate wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? What has already been done!<sup>o</sup> <sup>13</sup>And I saw that wisdom is as superior to folly as light to darkness. <sup>14</sup>The wise man's eyes are in his head,<sup>p</sup> but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I know that the same fate overtakes them all.

<sup>15</sup>So I said to myself, 'The fate of the fool will also overtake me. Of what advantage then is my superior wisdom?'<sup>q</sup> So I said to myself, 'This, too, is an illusion. <sup>16</sup>For the wise man is no more remembered forever than the fool; for in the days to come everyone will be forgotten. Alas! the wise man dies just like the fool!' <sup>17</sup>So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun seemed evil to me, for all is illusion and a chasing of the wind.

<sup>18</sup>Also I hated all that for which I had toiled under the sun, for I must leave it to my successor; <sup>19</sup>and who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will control all that for which I have toiled and exercised my wisdom under the sun. This also is an illusion.

Vanity of  
striving  
to possess  
and  
attain  
wealth

<sup>20</sup>So I gave myself up to despair over all for which I had toiled under the sun, <sup>21</sup>for a man who toils with wisdom and knowledge and success must leave his property to one who has not toiled for it. This also is an illusion and a great misfortune. <sup>22</sup>For what does a man get for all his labor and his carefully laid plans for which he toils under the sun? <sup>23</sup>For all his days are full of pain<sup>r</sup> and his task a vexation, with no rest for his mind even at night. This also is an illusion. <sup>24</sup>There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and find pleasure<sup>s</sup> in his toil. This also, I perceive, is the gift of God. <sup>25</sup>For who can eat or who can have enjoyment apart from him?<sup>t</sup> <sup>26</sup><sup>b</sup>But this, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.<sup>u</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <sup>28</sup> The exact meaning of the Heb. is not clear. Gk. and Theod., *male and female cup-bearers*. The context demands a meaning akin to that given above.

<sup>o</sup> <sup>12</sup> *I. e.*, the king with royal resources at his command is able to exhaust every possibility of pleasure.

<sup>p</sup> <sup>14</sup> *I. e.*, he can at least see where he is going.

<sup>q</sup> <sup>15</sup> Lit., *Why then am I excessively wise?*

<sup>r</sup> <sup>23</sup> Lit., *are pains*.

<sup>s</sup> <sup>24</sup> Lit., *cause himself to see good*. As Jastrow has pointed out, this is current slang, exactly equivalent to our phrase *having a good time*.

<sup>t</sup> <sup>25</sup> Slightly changing the Heb. So Gk., Syr., and Lat., and some Heb. MSS.

<sup>u</sup> <sup>26</sup> The first part of this verse reads: *For to the man who pleases him he gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he gives travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him who pleases God*. This absolutely contradicts the thought of <sup>12-17</sup>, in which Koheleth maintains that a like fate awaits the wise man and the fool. It was evidently added by a later sage who wished to correct the author's false teaching.

## KOEHELETH'S VAIN QUEST

### § 3. Man's Helplessness Under God's Fixed Rule, Ecc. 3<sup>1-15</sup>

Fixed  
time  
for all  
things

**Ecc. 3** <sup>1</sup>For everything there is a fixed season,  
And a time for every purpose under heaven:  
<sup>2</sup>A time to be born and a time to die,<sup>v</sup>  
A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted,  
<sup>3</sup>A time to kill and a time to heal,  
A time to tear down and a time to build,  
<sup>4</sup>A time to weep and a time to laugh,  
A time to wail and a time to dance,  
<sup>5</sup>A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones,  
A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
<sup>6</sup>A time to seek and a time to lose,  
A time to keep and a time to cast away,  
<sup>7</sup>A time to rend and a time to sew,  
A time to keep silence and a time to speak,  
<sup>8</sup>A time to love and a time to hate,  
A time of war and a time of peace.

Man's  
fixed  
role is  
to make  
the best  
out of  
life

<sup>9</sup>What profit has the worker in the fruit of his toil? <sup>10</sup>I have seen the task which God has given men to do. <sup>11</sup>He has made everything beautiful in its season, but he has also put ignorance<sup>w</sup> in men's minds, so that they cannot discover from beginning to end the work that God is doing. <sup>12</sup>I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good while they live. <sup>13</sup>Also that every man should eat and drink and have a good time<sup>x</sup> in all his toil is the gift of God.

God's  
will  
irrevo-  
cable

<sup>14</sup>I know, too, that whatever God does is eternal; nothing can be added to it nor taken from it; and God has done so that men may revere him. <sup>15</sup>What is there that now is? Already it has been, and that which is to be already is, and God will seek again that which has been driven away.

### § 4. Man's Lot No Better Than That of the Beast, Ecc. 3<sup>16-22</sup>

No  
justice

**Ecc. 3** <sup>16</sup>Moreover I saw under the sun in the place of justice, crime; yes, in the place of righteousness there was wickedness! <sup>18</sup>I said to myself, 'It is for the sake of mankind, that God may test them, and show them that they are beasts.'<sup>v</sup> <sup>19</sup>For the fate of mankind and of beasts is the same.

§ 3 The author proceeds to illustrate still further the vanity (illusion) of all human endeavor. Man is circumscribed on every side by fixed limitations which forbid the realization of his highest aspirations. Eating and toil are the only sources of real pleasure left open to man under God's iron rule.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>32</sup> The author probably means that the time of a man's birth and the time of his death are both fixed by God. So the Moslem believes to-day.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>31</sup> Pointing the Heb. as the context demands and translating as the ground root of the verb, *hidden*, implies.

<sup>z</sup> <sup>32</sup> Lit., *see good*. Cf. note on <sup>24</sup>.

§ 4 Here Koheleth reveals his Sadducean training. He evidently had in mind Job's bold assertion of his belief in personal vindication after the grave, Job 19<sup>23-27</sup>. Possibly he had also come into contact with the Platonic teaching regarding individual immortality. Both of these he rejects. Into this negative setting a Pharisaic editor has injected in <sup>17</sup> the opposite doctrine: *I said to myself, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter and for every work*. The later editor employs the same introductory formula as does Koheleth in <sup>18</sup>.

It is clear that <sup>18</sup> was the original sequel of <sup>16</sup>.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>318</sup> Through a scribal repetition the Heb. text has been expanded.

## MAN'S LOT

The one dies like the other; and they all have the same spirit. Man has no advantage over the beast, for all is but an illusion. <sup>20</sup>All go to the same place; all sprang from the dust, and will return to the dust. <sup>21</sup>Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth? <sup>22</sup>So I perceived that there is nothing better for man than to find pleasure in his activities, for that is his privilege; for who can help him to see what shall be after him?

### § 5. Human Life Full of Injustice and Disappointment, Ecc. 4<sup>1-16</sup>

**Ecc. 4** <sup>1</sup>Again I considered all the oppressions that are practised under the sun, and saw the tears of the oppressed. And they had no one to comfort them; on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no one to comfort them. <sup>2</sup>Therefore I deemed those who have long been dead more fortunate than those who are still alive; <sup>3</sup>and better off than either is the one who has not yet been born, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Oppression everywhere; better not to live

<sup>4</sup>Then I perceived that all toil and all skilful work is the result of a man's rivalry with his neighbor. This, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind. <sup>5</sup>Better is a handful with quiet<sup>a</sup> than two handfuls with toil and a chasing of the wind.

Vanity of all competition

<sup>7</sup>Then I again saw an illusion under the sun. <sup>8</sup>There is one man alone, without a second; he has neither son nor brother; yet there is no end of all his toil, and his eye<sup>b</sup> is not satisfied with riches. For whom then do I labor and deprive myself of good? This also is an illusion and an evil struggle. <sup>9</sup>Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil; <sup>10</sup>for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him<sup>c</sup> who is alone when he falls and has none to lift him up! <sup>11</sup>Also, if two lie together they have warmth; but one alone—how can he be warm? <sup>12</sup>And if a man<sup>d</sup> could overpower one alone, two could withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.<sup>e</sup>

Isolation of wealth and its fruitlessness

<sup>13</sup>Better than an old and foolish king, who no longer knows how to receive instruction, is a poor but wise youth,<sup>f</sup> <sup>14</sup>although he came forth from prison<sup>g</sup> to be king, and even though in his kingdom he was born poor. <sup>15</sup>I saw that all the living who walk under the sun were with the youth (the second), who stood up in his stead. <sup>16</sup>There was no end of all the people over whom

All power ephemeral

§ 5 In 47-12 Koheleth pours out the bitterness of his soul: isolated, without friend or relative, he is compelled in his tottering old age to meet the shocks of life unaided. Vss. 9-12 have been regarded by scholars as later additions, but they apparently reflect Koheleth's own bitter experience and the sense of utter loneliness which rests like a pall upon his entire philosophy of life.

<sup>a</sup> 44 A scribe has added the proverb, *The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh*. It is a condensation of Pr. 24<sup>32-33</sup> and is inconsistent with the context, especially the vs. which follows.

<sup>b</sup> 46 Lit., *palm full of rest*. Cf. for the same idea Pr. 15<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> 48 So Gk., Syr., Targ., and marginal reading of Heb.

<sup>d</sup> 410 So many MSS.

<sup>e</sup> 412 I. e., a robber.

<sup>f</sup> 413 I. e., three constitute a sure defense.

<sup>g</sup> 413 The allusion is probably to Ptolemy V of Egypt, who succeeded his aged father, Ptolemy IV, at the age of five. If Koheleth had in mind a classic illustration, it was probably that of Joseph; the latter, however, did not succeed Pharaoh on the throne of Egypt.

<sup>h</sup> 414 So Gk., Lat., and certain MSS. The traditional Heb. is doubtful. It may be revised to read, *rebellious house*. If so, the reference is probably to the Ptolemaic dynasty.



## KOH ELETH'S VAIN QUEST

he ruled; yet those who came after could not delight in him. Surely this, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.

### § 6. Maxims Intended to Deliver from the Vexations of Life, Ecc. 5<sup>1-9</sup>

Right  
attitude  
toward  
God

**Ecc. 5** <sup>1</sup>Be careful what you do when you go to the house of God; and go there to listen rather than to have fools offer a sacrifice, for they do not know that they are doing wrong. <sup>2</sup>Do not be rash with your mouth, and do not let your mind be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few. <sup>3</sup>For a dream comes through a multitude of business, and a fool's voice through a multitude of words. <sup>4</sup>When you vow a vow to God do not delay to pay it, for he has no pleasure in fools; pay what you vow. <sup>5</sup>Better is it that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. <sup>6</sup>Do not allow your mouth to make your flesh sin, and do not speak in the presence of the angel,<sup>h</sup> for that is a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? <sup>7</sup>But fear God.<sup>i</sup>

Fidelity  
in paying  
vows

<sup>8</sup>If you see the oppression of the poor, and the wresting of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter, for one high official is watching above another, and there are higher ones over them.<sup>j</sup> <sup>9</sup>A king on the whole is an advantage to a land, at least to a cultivated land.<sup>k</sup>

Do not  
try to  
under-  
stand  
all the  
evils  
of life

### § 7. Folly of Expecting More Than Passing Enjoyment from Wealth, Ecc. 5<sup>10-20</sup>

Riches  
unsatis-  
factory

**Ecc. 5** <sup>10</sup>He who loves money is never satisfied with money, nor he who loves a great fortune<sup>l</sup> with gain. This also is an illusion. <sup>11</sup>When wealth increases, they increase who share it; and what advantage is there to the owner except to see it with his eyes? <sup>12</sup>The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the satiety of the rich does not let him sleep.

Riches  
often a  
curse

<sup>13</sup>One of the grievous evils which I have seen under the sun is wealth hoarded by its owner to his ruin. <sup>14</sup>When this wealth is lost through a bad venture after he has become a father, his son has nothing in hand at all. <sup>15</sup>As he came naked from his mother's womb, so he returns just as he came,<sup>m</sup> and he receives for his toil nothing which he may carry away in his hand. <sup>16</sup>This also is a grievous evil, that he must go away just as he came, and what

§ 6 The counsel in 5<sup>2</sup> is an echo from the Book of Job and may be an interpolation, intended as a rebuke of Koheleth's intemperate moods. In fact, the authorship of the entire passage, 5<sup>1-7</sup>, is uncertain. There is nothing in it, however, that could not come from Koheleth. On the whole, it is perhaps most satisfactory to regard these maxims as a development of his utilitarian philosophy: to avoid everything which might offend the Deity, if you would escape disaster. While defective in measured beat, the passage is characterized by a certain rhythm of ideas.

<sup>h</sup> 5<sup>6</sup> Gk. and Syr., *God*; this may represent the original meaning. In any case the angel is God's direct representative, as the latter part of the verse makes clear.

<sup>i</sup> 5<sup>7</sup> A scribe who had<sup>q</sup> in mind has inserted before this clause the awkward and corrupt gloss: *for in the multitude of dreams there are vanities and in many words*. If an original passage lies back of these words, it has become hopelessly corrupt.

<sup>j</sup> 5<sup>8</sup> A graphic description of the corrupt officialdom that prevailed in ancient Persia and Egypt.

<sup>k</sup> 5<sup>9</sup> *I. e.*, where the protection of some form of government is necessary.

§ 7 Here Koheleth discusses in detail the value of wealth which he has already touched upon in 2<sup>8</sup>. Again he clearly speaks out of the depths of his own personal experience.

<sup>l</sup> 5<sup>10</sup> So Syr. and Targ. (lit., *mammon*). Heb., *multitude*.

<sup>m</sup> 5<sup>16</sup> The author here echoes the Book of Job, cf. Job 1<sup>21</sup>.



## WEALTH UNSATISFYING

advantage is it to him that he toils for the wind,<sup>17</sup> and spends all his days in darkness<sup>a</sup> and mourning and great vexation and sickness and distress?

<sup>18</sup>This is what I have observed: it is good and proper for one to eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of all his toil under the sun during the span of life which God has given him; for this is his right. <sup>19</sup>Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth and the power to enjoy them and to take up his task<sup>o</sup> and to be happy in his toil—this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup>For he should remember that life is short and that God approves of his being happy.

Man's  
highest  
privilege

### § 8. Human Desire Is Insatiable, Ecc. 6<sup>1-9</sup>

**Ecc. 6** <sup>1</sup>There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy<sup>p</sup> upon mankind. <sup>2</sup>God gives a man<sup>a</sup> wealth and treasures and honor; he lacks nothing of all that he desires; yet God does not enable him to eat any of it, but an outsider eats it. This is an illusion, and it is a bad disease. <sup>3</sup>If a man has a hundred children and lives many years, yet in spite of the length of his life<sup>r</sup> remains unsatisfied,<sup>s</sup> and he has not even a grave, I say an abortion is better off than he is. <sup>4</sup>For in<sup>t</sup> illusion it came and in<sup>t</sup> darkness it goes, and in darkness its name is hidden; <sup>5</sup>moreover it did not see the sun and did not know anything. It has a better rest than he has. <sup>6</sup>Even if he lived a thousand years twice over and did not enjoy himself,<sup>u</sup> do not all go to one place?

Evils of  
unsatis-  
fied  
desire

<sup>7</sup>All man's toil is for his mouth, but even so he<sup>v</sup> is not filled. <sup>8</sup>For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? What advantage has a poor man who knows how to walk before the living?<sup>w</sup> <sup>9</sup>The sight of the eyes is better than the wandering of desire. This, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.

### § 9. The Fruitlessness of Philosophical Speculation, Ecc. 6<sup>10-12</sup>, 10<sup>14</sup>, 7<sup>10</sup>, 14

**Ecc. 6** <sup>10</sup>What has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is. He cannot go to court against one who is more powerful than he is. <sup>11</sup>For there are words a-plenty—increasing the illusion. What advantage has man? <sup>12</sup>For who knows what good man has<sup>x</sup> in life through-

Do not  
try to  
solve  
life's  
mysteries

<sup>a</sup> 5<sup>17</sup> So Gk. Heb., in darkness he eats.

<sup>o</sup> 5<sup>19</sup> Lit., lot.

<sup>s</sup> 8 These vss. might serve as a text for the Buddhist contention that the root of all evil is desire.

<sup>p</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> Lit., great.

<sup>a</sup> 6<sup>2</sup> Lit., a man to whom God gives.

<sup>r</sup> 6<sup>3</sup> The words thus freely rendered are difficult; probably the text is more or less corrupt. The translation is based on the conjecture that the Heb. means, lit., many as are the days of his years.

<sup>u</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> Lit., his soul is not satisfied with good.

<sup>t</sup> 6<sup>4</sup> Or, into.

<sup>v</sup> 6<sup>8</sup> Lit., see good.

<sup>v</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> Lit., the soul; i. e., the appetite. The Heb. word is used in many senses.

<sup>w</sup> 6<sup>9</sup> Commentators explain this as referring to a man who has risen from poverty by the exercise of prudence. It may mean, however, What is the use of knowing how to behave when you are poor?—i. e., ethics will not make the mare go.

<sup>x</sup> 9 Speculation regarding man's nature, the meaning of life, and the future seems to K. quite futile. Attempts to find in this book traces of the influence of Greek philosophy have not been conspicuously successful, but it is not impossible that in this section we have a negative reaction, a deprecation of the fundamental point of view of Greek philosophy. For 7<sup>1-9</sup>, 11-12, see § 15; cf. also Introd., pp. 20f.

<sup>y</sup> 6<sup>12</sup> Or what is good for man. Is this a reflection upon the philosophers' discussion of the Summum Bonum?

## KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST

out his illusory existence?<sup>y</sup> He spends it like a shadow. Who will tell man what is to be after him under the sun? 10 <sup>14</sup>Man does not know what is to be, and what is to be after him who can tell him?<sup>z</sup> 7 <sup>10</sup>Do not say, 'How did it come about that the olden days were better than these?' It is not wisdom that makes you ask<sup>a</sup> about this. <sup>14</sup>In the day of good fortune be of good cheer,<sup>b</sup> and in the day of misfortune<sup>c</sup> consider: God has made the one corresponding to the other in order that man might not find out anything of what is to be after him.<sup>d</sup>

### § 10. Perfection Undesirable and Non-Existent, Ecc. 7<sup>15-18</sup>. 20-23

**Ecc. 7** <sup>15</sup>I have seen everything in the course of my illusory existence.<sup>e</sup> There is such a thing as a righteous man who perishes by his righteousness, and there is such a thing as a wicked man who prolongs his life by his wickedness. <sup>16</sup>Do not be righteous to excess, and do not make yourself wise beyond measure. Why should you destroy yourself? <sup>17</sup>Do not be wicked to excess, and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time? <sup>18</sup>It is well that you take hold of the one, but at the same time do not withhold your hand from the other.<sup>f</sup> <sup>20</sup>For no man on earth is so righteous that he does right and does not sin. <sup>21</sup>Furthermore, do not pay attention to everything that is said,<sup>g</sup> or you may<sup>h</sup> hear your servant curse you. <sup>22</sup>For you know in your heart<sup>i</sup> that many times you too have yourself cursed others. <sup>23</sup>All this I have tested with wisdom. I said, 'I will be wise,' but it was far beyond me. <sup>24</sup>Far away is that which exists, and it is deep, deep—who can find it? <sup>25</sup>I bestirred myself mentally<sup>j</sup> to search<sup>k</sup> and seek for wisdom and the solution<sup>l</sup> and to know that wickedness is folly and foolishness madness. <sup>26</sup>I found something more bitter than death—a woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands are fetters. Whoever pleases God shall escape her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.<sup>m</sup> <sup>27</sup>See, I have found this, says Koheleth, putting two and two together<sup>n</sup> to find the solution,<sup>1</sup> <sup>28</sup>which I have sought

<sup>y</sup> 612 Lit., *the number of the days of the life of his illusion*.

<sup>z</sup> 10<sup>14</sup> This verse (except the opening clause, *And a fool multiplies words*) is probably a misplaced fragment from the original work of K., though the passage in which it now occurs, 10<sup>14-16</sup>, seems to be the work of a later sage (cf. § 15). It fits the context better here than in that passage, which has nothing to do with a knowledge of the future.

<sup>a</sup> 7<sup>10</sup> Lit., *not out of wisdom have you asked*.

<sup>b</sup> 7<sup>14</sup> The words *fortune* and *cheer* are implied but not expressed in the Heb.

<sup>c</sup> 7<sup>14</sup> Lit., *evil*.

<sup>d</sup> 7<sup>14</sup> I. e., good and evil are so evenly balanced in life that it is impossible to say which will prevail in the future.

§ 10 Koheleth's cynical counsel is very different from Aristotle's doctrine of the Golden Mean or Buddha's Middle Way: it recommends, not a virtuous mean between two vicious extremes, but a mean of prudence, avoiding extreme virtue as much as extreme vice. The remarks about women (7<sup>26-28</sup>) are not obviously relevant; they seem to be a spontaneous outburst of bitter memory connected with Koheleth's quest of wisdom through experience (cf. § 2).

<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>15</sup> Lit., *the days of my illusion*.

<sup>f</sup> 7<sup>18</sup> A pious scribe has added: *For he who fears God will come clear from both of them*. For <sup>11</sup>, cf. § 15.

<sup>g</sup> 7<sup>21</sup> Lit., *all the words that they speak*.

<sup>h</sup> 7<sup>21</sup> Lit., *that you may not*.

<sup>i</sup> 7<sup>22</sup> Lit., *your heart* (i. e., your conscience) *knows*.

<sup>j</sup> 7<sup>25</sup> Lit., *went about in* (or *with*) *my mind*, adopting the reading of many MSS. and some of the VSS.

<sup>k</sup> 7<sup>25</sup> Heb., *to know and to search and to seek*, but the words *to know* were probably copied in by mistake from the latter part of the vs.

<sup>l</sup> 7<sup>25</sup>, <sup>27</sup> Lit., *accounting or reckoning*.

<sup>m</sup> 7<sup>26</sup> On this sentence, cf. *Introd.*, p. 18.

<sup>n</sup> 7<sup>27</sup> Lit., *one to one*; i. e., one thing to another.

Strike  
the mean  
between  
vice and  
holiness

Ignore  
gossip

Philoso-  
phy  
futile

Woman's  
guile

## PERFECTION NON-EXISTENT

repeatedly without finding it: one man out of a thousand I have found, but a woman among all these I have not found.<sup>o</sup>

### § 11. The Right Attitude Toward Rulers, Ecc. 8<sup>2-9</sup>, 10<sup>4-7</sup>, 16, 17, 20

**Ecc. 8** <sup>2</sup>Observe the command of a king;<sup>p</sup>

Despotic  
power

<sup>3</sup>Do not rashly go out from his presence,

Do not oppose him in an evil matter,<sup>q</sup>

For he does whatever he pleases.

<sup>4</sup>For the word of a king is powerful,

And who shall say to him, What are you doing?

<sup>5</sup>He who keeps the command knows no evil thing;

And a wise heart knows time and judgment;<sup>r</sup>

<sup>6</sup>For every matter has a time and judgment,

Because the misery of man is great upon him.<sup>r</sup>

<sup>7</sup>For no man knows what shall be,

For who can tell him how it shall be?

<sup>8</sup>No man has power over the wind to retain the wind,

Neither has anyone power over the day of death.

There is no discharge in war,

Neither shall the evil-doer escape the consequences of his deeds.<sup>s</sup>

<sup>9</sup>All this have I seen,

And I have given my attention

To every work that is done under the sun

In a time when man has power over another to do him harm.

**10** <sup>4</sup>If the ruler's anger<sup>t</sup> rises against you, do not leave your place,<sup>u</sup> for conciliation<sup>v</sup> will allay great sins. <sup>5</sup>There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, an error,<sup>w</sup> as it were, proceeding from the ruler: <sup>6</sup>he puts fools<sup>x</sup> in many high places, while the rich<sup>y</sup> live in humiliation. <sup>7</sup>I have seen slaves on horseback and princes walking like slaves on the ground.

<sup>16</sup>Alas for you, land whose king is a child,<sup>z</sup>

And whose princes eat in the morning!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Happy are you, land whose king is of the nobility,

And whose princes eat at the proper time,

<sup>o</sup> 728 To this vs. a pious editor adds, <sup>20</sup> *Only see, I have found this, that God made mankind up-right, but they have sought many devices.*

§ 11 This discussion of despotism has been prefaced by the maxims of a later sage, cf. § 15. The sequel of <sup>2a</sup> is found in <sup>3</sup>. Into the heart of this original observation of Koheleth a Pharisaic scribe has injected the line, *even on account of the oath of God*. The reference is probably to the oath of allegiance which each subject was supposed to take on the king's accession.

<sup>p</sup> 82 So Gk. and Syr. Through a scribal error the Heb. reads at the beginning of the line the pronoun, *I*.

<sup>q</sup> 83 Lit., *Do not stand in an evil matter*. The exact meaning is obscure, but the context favors the above reading, and it is in harmony with K.'s Sadducean opportunism.

<sup>r</sup> 84-6 These vs. are by many commentators regarded as the additions of a Pharisaic editor.

<sup>s</sup> 88 Lit., *neither shall wickedness effect an escape for its owners*.

<sup>t</sup> 104 Lit., *spirit*.

<sup>u</sup> 104 Barton interprets this as meaning resignation from an official position.

<sup>v</sup> 104 Lit., *healing*. The meaning of the clause is that a conciliatory attitude may appease even the anger aroused by grave offenses.

<sup>w</sup> 105 The Heb. word indicates unintentional sin.

<sup>x</sup> 106 Heb., *folly*. VSS., *the fool*.

<sup>y</sup> 106 *I. e.*, the landed aristocracy.

<sup>z</sup> 106 On the historical background of this passage, cf. *Introd.*, p. 17.

<sup>a</sup> 106 *I. e.*, are so given to revelry that they cannot wait until the proper time for their feasts.

## KOHLETH'S VAIN QUEST

For strength and not for drinking!

<sup>20</sup>Even in your thought do not curse a king,  
And in your bed-chamber do not curse a rich man,  
Because a bird of the heavens will carry the sound,  
And a winged creature<sup>b</sup> will tell a matter.

### § 12. Righteous and Wicked Fare Alike, Ecc. 8<sup>10</sup>, 14-15

Injustice  
of life

**Ecc. 8** <sup>10</sup>I saw wicked men offering sacrifice;<sup>c</sup> and they came, and went from the holy place, and were praised in the city for doing thus. This also is an illusion.<sup>d</sup> <sup>14</sup>There is an illusion which exists on the earth, in that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked, and there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous; I say that this too is an illusion. <sup>15</sup>Then I commended mirth, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be joyful, for that will abide with him in his toil all the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.

### § 13. No Evidence That the World Is Ruled by Divine Justice and Love, Ecc. 8<sup>15</sup>-9<sup>1a</sup>

Folly of  
seeking  
to know  
the  
character  
of God  
and the  
reasons  
for his  
acts

**Ecc. 8** <sup>15</sup>Then I applied my mind to know wisdom, and to see the wearisome labor that is done on the earth,—for neither by day nor by night does he<sup>e</sup> see sleep with his eyes. <sup>17</sup>I also saw all the work of God, that man cannot fathom the work that is done under the sun; because however much<sup>f</sup> a man may toil to search it out, he will not fathom it; and even if a wise man thinks he can know it, he will not be able to fathom it. <sup>9</sup> <sup>1</sup>For all this I stored up in my mind; and my mind saw<sup>g</sup> that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. Whether it be love or hatred, men do not<sup>h</sup> know. All before them is illusion,<sup>i</sup> <sup>2</sup>since to all there is one fate, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the evil,<sup>j</sup> to the clean and to the unclean, to him who sacrifices and to him who does not sacrifice. As is the good man, so is the sinner; he who swears is as he who fears an oath.

Final  
end of  
the good  
and bad  
the same

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>20</sup> Lit., an owner of wings.

<sup>b</sup> 12 Kohleth's observation of life has not convinced him that honesty is the best policy.

<sup>c</sup> 310 This vs. is obscure. The *holy place* is clearly the temple. The above rendering, suggested by Prof. C. C. Torrey, is based on a reconstruction of the text. The idea clearly is that the wicked often have an honorable funeral. The last part of the vs. may be read, *Those who did right were forgotten in the city, etc.; i. e., the righteous go down to the grave in obscurity.* Heb. reads, *forgotten*, but many MSS. and several VSS. read, *praised*.

<sup>d</sup> 310 A pious scribe in the next three vs. takes issue with Kohleth: *"Because the sentence of an evil deed is not promptly executed, men are inclined to do wrong. But although a sinner does wrong persistently and goes on unpunished, I know that good fortune will come to those who revere God, who are reverent before him, but good fortune will not come to the wicked, and he will not prolong his life like a shadow, because he is not reverent before God."*

<sup>e</sup> 13 Finding no solace in the contemplation of his fellow men and their conduct, K. turns to God and seeks in vain for proof that he rewards the good and evil either in this life or in the life beyond death. In this section his pessimism reaches its lowest depths.

<sup>f</sup> 816 I. e., man, who toils incessantly.

<sup>g</sup> 817 Slightly correcting the Heb.

<sup>h</sup> 91 So Gk. and Syr. Heb., and to explore.

<sup>i</sup> 91 Heb., *man does not*, but the change to the plural in the next sentence makes awkward English.

<sup>j</sup> 91 So VSS. supported by context. Heb. omits *illusion*, but begins the next vs. with a word which may well be due to a misreading of the word wanted here.

<sup>k</sup> 92 So the Gk., Syr., Lat., and the demands of the parallelism. Heb. omits *and to the evil*.



## NO EVIDENCE OF DIVINE JUSTICE

<sup>2</sup>The worst evil of all that exists under the sun is that there is one fate for all, and that the minds of men are full of evil and boastful thoughts while they live, and after that they join the dead. <sup>4</sup>Yet, there is hope for all who are still alive, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. <sup>5</sup>For the living know that they will die, but the dead know absolutely nothing, nor do they have any further compensation, for their memory is forgotten. <sup>6</sup>Their love, their hate, and their jealousy have already vanished, and never more will they have a share in anything that is done under the sun.

<sup>7</sup>So go, eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved your actions.<sup>k</sup> <sup>8</sup>Let your garments be always white; and let not your head lack oil.<sup>l</sup> <sup>9</sup>Enjoy life<sup>m</sup> with the woman whom you love all the days of the vain life which God gives you under the sun, for that is your lot in life, the reward of your toil under the sun. <sup>10</sup>Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work, nor reckoning, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the abode of the dead to which you are going.

<sup>11</sup>Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; the wise have no food, nor men of insight wealth, nor the learned popular favor; but all alike are the victims of time and chance. <sup>12</sup>For man also knows not his time: like fishes that are taken in an evil net, and like birds caught in a snare, the sons of men are taken at an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them.

<sup>13</sup>Also this have I seen as a bit of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me: <sup>14</sup>there was a little city, and few men within it, and a great king came against it and besieged it and built great siege-works<sup>n</sup> against it. <sup>15</sup>Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and by his wisdom he delivered the city; yet nobody remembered that poor man. <sup>16</sup>Then I said, 'Wisdom is better than strength; nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.'<sup>o</sup>

Therefore enjoy the opportunities of the present

Human fortunes determined not by merit but by chance and destiny

Practical illustration: wisdom of service, but not rewarded

### § 14. Making the Most of Life and Youth, Ecc. 11<sup>1-10</sup>, 12<sup>1-8</sup>

- Ecc. 11** <sup>1</sup>Cast your bread upon the waters,<sup>p</sup>  
And after many days you will find it.  
<sup>2</sup>Divide it up into seven or eight parts,<sup>q</sup>  
For you know not what disaster may befall the land.  
<sup>3</sup>If the clouds are full of rain,  
They empty themselves on the earth.  
If a tree falls to the south or the north,  
In the place where it falls, it lies.

Liberal dealing recommended

<sup>k</sup> 97 *I. e.*, this is the natural and inevitable and therefore the right thing to do in the world as God has constituted it.

<sup>l</sup> 98 Cf. Bab. philosophy contained in the Gilgamesh epic (Intro., p. 20).

<sup>m</sup> 99 Lit., *see life*.

<sup>n</sup> 914 So the VSS. and a few MSS.

<sup>o</sup> 916 This arraignment of wisdom inspired a later sage to add a little poem in praise of wisdom, 917-103, cf. § 15.

§ 14 A poem presenting the practical implications of Koheleth's view of life. For the literary form of Ecc., cf. Intro., p. 19.

<sup>p</sup> 111 Probably this refers to liberality, though other interpretations have been advocated; *e. g.*, investing freely in maritime enterprises.

<sup>q</sup> 112 Lit., *Give a portion to seven and even to eight.*



## KOELETH'S VAIN QUEST

<sup>4</sup>He who observes the wind does not sow,  
And he who watches the clouds does not reap.  
<sup>5</sup>As you know not in what way the spirit  
Enters the pregnant womb,<sup>r</sup>  
So you do not know how God works,—  
He who creates the whole.

God's  
ways  
mysteri-  
ous

<sup>6</sup>In the morning<sup>a</sup> sow your seed,  
And let not your hand rest until evening,  
For you do not know which is the better,  
Or whether both are equally good.

Neglect  
no op-  
portunity

<sup>7</sup>The light is sweet to the eyes,<sup>t</sup>  
And it is pleasant to see the sun.  
<sup>8</sup>Though a man live many years,  
Let him be happy in all of them,  
Yet let him remember the days of darkness,  
For they shall indeed be many.  
All that is coming is vanity.

Enjoy  
the  
present

<sup>9</sup>Be happy, young man, in your youth,  
And let your heart make you merry while young.  
Follow your own inclinations,  
And all that appeals to your eyes,<sup>u</sup>

Youth's  
privilege

<sup>10</sup>Put vexation out of your mind,  
And banish all evil from your body,—  
For childhood and youth are illusions—

Miseries  
of old  
age

**12** <sup>1</sup>Before the evil days come on,<sup>v</sup>  
Or the years draw near when you shall say,  
'I find no pleasure in them.'  
<sup>2</sup>Before the sun is darkened,  
And the light of moon and stars,<sup>w</sup>  
And the clouds return after the rain;<sup>x</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>When the keepers of the house<sup>y</sup> tremble,  
The strong men<sup>z</sup> bow themselves,  
Those who look out of the windows<sup>a</sup> are dimmed,  
<sup>4</sup>And the doors to the street<sup>b</sup> are closed;  
When the sound of the grinding<sup>c</sup> is low,

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<sup>r</sup> 11<sup>5</sup> Translating freely. The Heb. is obscure and uncertain.

<sup>a</sup> 11<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, the morning of life.

<sup>t</sup> 11<sup>7</sup> Slightly rearranging the Heb. on the basis of metre. The meaning is not affected.

<sup>u</sup> 11<sup>8</sup> A devout scribe adds, *But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.*

<sup>v</sup> 12<sup>1</sup> The scribe gives quite a different turn to Koheleth's teaching by inserting before this line the warning: *But remember your Creator in the days of your youth.*

<sup>w</sup> 12<sup>2</sup> The world does not look so bright in old age as in youth.

<sup>x</sup> 12<sup>3</sup> Times of gloom are not brief and infrequent, as in youth, but follow one another immediately.

<sup>y</sup> 12<sup>3</sup> Probably the hands.

<sup>z</sup> 12<sup>3</sup> The legs.

<sup>a</sup> 12<sup>3</sup> The eyes.

<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>3</sup> Probably the lips.

<sup>c</sup> 12<sup>4</sup> The reference is probably to the toothlessness of old age.

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUTH

And one rises at the voice of a bird,<sup>d</sup>  
 And the daughters of song are all feeble.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>¶</sup>Then too one is afraid of a height,<sup>f</sup>  
 And the way is full of terrors,<sup>g</sup>  
 The almond tree puts forth its blossoms,<sup>h</sup>  
 The grasshopper limps along,<sup>i</sup>  
 And the fire of passion is dead;<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>¶</sup>Before the silver cord is snapped,  
 And the golden bowl is broken,<sup>k</sup>  
 The pitcher broken at the fountain,  
 And the wheel broken at the cistern;<sup>l</sup>  
 For the man goes to his eternal home,  
 And the mourners go about the streets;<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>¶</sup>The dust returns to earth as it was,  
 And the breath<sup>n</sup> returns to God who gave it.  
<sup>¶</sup>Vanity of vanities, says Koheleth,<sup>o</sup>  
 All is illusion.<sup>p</sup>

§ 15. Observations of Later Wise Men, Ecc. 7:1-9, 11-13, 19, 8:1, 9:17-18, 10:1-3, 8-13, 15, 18-19

**Ecc. 7**    <sup>1</sup>A good name is better than good ointment,  
                   And the day of death than the day of one's birth.  
<sup>2</sup>It is better to go to the house of mourning  
                   Than to go to the house of feasting,  
                   For that is the common end of man,  
                   And the living will lay it to heart.

Mourning  
better  
than  
mirth

<sup>d</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> The sleep of the aged is brief and easily disturbed.  
<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> This may refer either to the weakness of the voice or to the failure of hearing.  
<sup>f</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Shortness of breath prevents climbing.  
<sup>g</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Feebleness makes the aged timorous.  
<sup>h</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> A striking figure, likening the hoary head to the almond tree with its white blossoms.  
<sup>i</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> The meaning of this line is quite uncertain. According to the interpretation on which the translation is based, the reference is to the halting gait of the aged.  
<sup>j</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Lit., *the caper-berry* (used to stimulate passion) *fails*. For the rest of this vs., see the end of vs. <sup>g</sup> and note <sup>m</sup>.  
<sup>k</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Life is quenched like the light of a lamp when the cord by which it is suspended breaks.  
<sup>l</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Another picture of the breaking down of the machinery of the body. No water can be drawn when the pitcher and the wheel are broken.  
<sup>m</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> This and the preceding line come at the end of vs. <sup>g</sup> in the text, but the order followed above seems preferable.  
<sup>n</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Or *spirit*, the word being the same in Heb.  
<sup>o</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> Cf. note <sup>b</sup> on 1<sup>a</sup>, § 1.  
<sup>p</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> *Vanity* and *illusion* in the translation represent the same Heb. word. Cf. note <sup>a</sup> on 1<sup>a</sup>, § 1. This verse, the conclusion of the original work of Koheleth, is identical with 1<sup>a</sup>. The book begins and ends, therefore, with the same statement, summing up the results of Koheleth's observation of life. A later editor, who regards both Ecc. and Pr. as the work of Solomon, adds this appendix: <sup>¶</sup>*And in addition to the fact that Koheleth was wise, he still taught the people knowledge, and weighed and examined and arranged many proverbs.* <sup>¶</sup>*Koheleth sought to find words that were pleasing, yet with uprightness he wrote words that were true.* <sup>¶</sup>*Wise men's words are like goads, but like well-driven nails are the parts of collections,—they are given by one shepherd.* <sup>¶</sup>*But beyond these, my son, take warning: the making of many books is endless, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.* <sup>¶</sup>*The end of the matter—all has been heard.* To this the scribe who has sought by several interpolations to tone down Koheleth's teaching adds a final word:

Revere God and keep his commands,  
 For this is the whole duty of man;  
<sup>¶</sup>For God will bring every deed to the judgment  
 That is passed on all secret acts, good or bad.

§ 15 These passages differ in form and spirit from the scribal additions noted in the preceding sections. They belong to the same category as the Book of Pr., and may well have been added under the assumption that such utterances, having come down from Solomon, would be quite in place in a book written by him.

## KOELETH'S VAIN QUEST

<sup>2</sup>Grief is better than laughter,  
For through sadness<sup>a</sup> the heart may be made glad.  
<sup>4</sup>The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
But the mind of fools is in the house of mirth.

<sup>5</sup>It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man  
Than for one to listen to the song of fools.  
<sup>6</sup>For as the crackling of nettles under kettles,  
So is the laughter of a fool; it is vanity.

<sup>7</sup>For oppression makes a fool of a wise man,  
And a gift puts an end to intelligence.

<sup>8</sup>Better is the end of a thing than its beginning;  
Better is patience than a haughty spirit.  
<sup>9</sup>Do not quickly give way to anger;  
Only fools cherish wrath in their hearts.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Wisdom with an inheritance is good  
And advantageous to those who see the sun.  
<sup>12</sup>For the protection<sup>d</sup> of wisdom is like the protection of money,  
And the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to  
those who have it.

<sup>13</sup>See the work of God,  
For who can straighten what he made crooked?

<sup>19</sup>Wisdom makes the wise man stronger  
Than ten rulers<sup>e</sup> who are in a city.<sup>u</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <sup>1</sup>Who is like the wise man,  
And who knows the interpretation of a thing?  
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,  
And the hardness<sup>v</sup> of his face is changed.

<sup>9</sup> <sup>17</sup>The words of the wise spoken quietly<sup>w</sup>  
Are more effective than the loud cry of an arch-fool.  
<sup>18</sup>Wisdom is better than weapons,  
But one sinner destroys much good.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>1</sup>A dead fly corrupts<sup>x</sup> the perfumer's ointment,  
So a little folly destroys precious wisdom.<sup>y</sup>

<sup>a</sup> <sup>72</sup> Heb., *sadness of the face*.

<sup>c</sup> <sup>79</sup> Lit., *For anger rests in the bosom of fools*.

<sup>d</sup> <sup>712</sup> Lit., *shadow*.

<sup>e</sup> <sup>718</sup> Or perhaps the meaning is that wisdom gives more strength to the wise man than the protection of ten rulers would give him.

<sup>u</sup> <sup>719</sup> Apparently the security afforded by the city walls is in mind.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>8</sup> Lit., *strength*.

<sup>w</sup> <sup>917</sup> Lit., *heard in quiet*.

<sup>x</sup> <sup>101</sup> Correcting the Heb. as suggested by the VSS.

<sup>y</sup> <sup>101</sup> The Heb. of this line is corrupt, and the original reading can only be conjectured.

## LATER OBSERVATIONS

<sup>2</sup>A wise man's mind is at his right hand,  
 But a fool's mind is at his left hand.  
<sup>3</sup>Moreover, when a fool walks in the way his mind is lacking,  
 And he tells every one he<sup>2</sup> is a fool.

<sup>8</sup>He who digs a pit will fall into it,  
 And he who breaks through a wall will be snake-bitten.

Sundry  
 proverbs

<sup>9</sup>He who quarries stones will be hurt by them,  
 And he who hews trees is imperilled by them.

<sup>10</sup>In case the tool<sup>a</sup> is dull,  
 And he does not sharpen it,<sup>b</sup>  
 Then he must exert more strength;  
 But wisdom contributes to success.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>11</sup>If the serpent bites, not being charmed,  
 Then the charmer is of no use.

<sup>12</sup>The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,  
 But a fool's own lips will swallow him.

<sup>13</sup>The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly,  
 And the end of his talk is wicked madness.

<sup>14</sup>A fool's toil exhausts him,  
 Because he does not know how to go to town.

<sup>18</sup>Through idleness the rafters sink;  
 Through not lifting the hands<sup>d</sup> the house leaks.

<sup>19</sup>For laughter they make bread,  
 And wine makes life merry,  
 And money answers for everything.

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>8</sup> The ambiguity exists in the Heb.

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>10</sup> Lit., *iron*.

<sup>b</sup> 10<sup>10</sup> Lit., *its face*; i. e., edge.

<sup>c</sup> 10<sup>10</sup> Lit., *is an advantage for giving success*; or, following the VSS., *an advantage to him who succeeds*.

<sup>d</sup> 10<sup>18</sup> Lit., *the sinking of hands*.





**THE BOOK OF JOB**



# JOB

## A LYRIC DRAMA PRESENTING VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

### PROLOGUE

#### SUFFERING IS A TEST OF MAN'S PIETY, Job 1-2

**Job 1** <sup>1</sup>In the land of Uz there was a man named Job; and he was blameless and upright, one who revered God and avoided evil. <sup>2</sup>He had seven sons and three daughters; <sup>3</sup>and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred asses; and he had many servants, so that he was the richest man among all the peoples of the East.<sup>a</sup> <sup>4</sup>His sons used to gather and each in turn hold a feast in his own house; and they always invited their three sisters to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup>When their round of feasting was over,<sup>b</sup> it was Job's custom,<sup>c</sup> in order to absolve them from all possible guilt,<sup>d</sup> to offer burnt-offerings for each of them; for he said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and secretly cursed<sup>e</sup> God.' And this Job never failed to do.

Job's  
piety  
and  
pros-  
perity

<sup>6</sup>Now on a certain day when the Sons of God<sup>f</sup> presented themselves before Jehovah, the Adversary<sup>g</sup> came with them. <sup>7</sup>Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'From where do you come?' The Adversary answered, 'From going back and forth on the earth, and walking up and down on it.' <sup>8</sup>And Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is no man like him on the earth, blameless and upright, who reveres God and avoids evil.' <sup>9</sup>The Adversary replied, 'But is it for naught that Job fears God? <sup>10</sup>Have you not yourself made a hedge all about him, about his household, and about all that he has? You have blessed whatever he does,<sup>h</sup> and his possessions have vastly increased. <sup>11</sup>But just put out your hand now and touch all his possessions; he certainly will curse<sup>i</sup> you to your face.' <sup>12</sup>Then Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'See, everything that he possesses is in your power; only do not lay hands on Job himself.' So the Adversary left the presence of Jehovah.

The Ad-  
versary's  
accusa-  
tion

Divine  
permis-  
sion to  
test him

**Prologue.**—For a discussion of this introductory narrative and its relation to the Lyric Drama, cf. *Introd.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>12</sup> Lit., *greater than all the sons of the East.*

<sup>b</sup> <sup>12</sup> Lit., *the days of the feast had gone about.*

<sup>c</sup> <sup>12</sup> Heb., *he arose early in the morning and . . .* (i. e., did it zealously).

<sup>d</sup> <sup>12</sup> Lit., *Job sent and consecrated them; i. e., sent for them that they might participate in and so profit by the sacrifices for their ceremonial purification; cf. I Sam. 16<sup>5</sup>, Josh. 7<sup>13</sup>, Ex. 19<sup>10, 14</sup>.*

<sup>e</sup> <sup>12</sup> Lit., *blessed, then said good-bye to.* Possibly this is a scribe's softening of the original, which may have read *lit., cursed.*

<sup>f</sup> <sup>12</sup> I. e., divine beings, just as "sons of men" are human beings.

<sup>g</sup> <sup>12</sup> Heb., *the satan.* So Zech. 3<sup>1, 2</sup>. The same word is applied to David by the Philistine lords in I Sam. 29<sup>4</sup>. In I Chr. 21<sup>1</sup> the definite article disappears. On the being here referred to, cf. *Introd.*, p. 37.

<sup>h</sup> <sup>110</sup> So Gk., Syr., Targ.

<sup>i</sup> <sup>111</sup> Lit., *bless, but this* clearly used euphemistically to express the opposite meaning, as in <sup>5</sup>.

## PROLOGUE

First  
test: loss  
of all his  
possession  
sions

<sup>13</sup>Now on a certain day,<sup>1</sup> as Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking<sup>k</sup> in the oldest brother's house, <sup>14</sup>a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the asses were grazing near them <sup>15</sup>when Sabceans<sup>1</sup> suddenly attacked and seized them; the servants were put to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

<sup>16</sup>While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The fire of God<sup>m</sup> has fallen from heaven and has completely burned up the sheep and the servants, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

<sup>17</sup>While this man was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The Chaldeans,<sup>n</sup> attacking in three bands,<sup>o</sup> raided the camels and drove them away; the servants were put to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

<sup>18</sup>While this one was still<sup>p</sup> speaking, another messenger came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking<sup>q</sup> in their oldest brother's house <sup>19</sup>when a great wind came from across<sup>r</sup> the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house; it fell upon the young men and killed them. I alone have escaped to tell you.'

Job's  
pious  
resigna-  
tion

<sup>20</sup>Then Job rose, tore his robe, shaved his head, prostrated himself on the ground and worshipped, <sup>21</sup>saying:

Naked I came<sup>s</sup> from my mother's womb,  
And naked shall I return there!  
Jehovah gave, Jehovah has taken away;  
Blessed be the name of Jehovah!

<sup>22</sup>In all this Job did not sin nor blame<sup>t</sup> God.

Divine  
permis-  
sion to  
test Job  
by af-  
flicting  
his person

<sup>2</sup>On another day when the Sons of God presented themselves before Jehovah, the Adversary came with them.<sup>u</sup> <sup>2</sup>And Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'From where do you come?'

The Adversary answered, 'From going back and forth on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' <sup>3</sup>Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is no man like him in the earth, blameless and upright, one who reveres God and avoids evil; he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me to ruin him without cause.'

<sup>4</sup>The Adversary answered Jehovah, 'Skin for skin,<sup>v</sup> yes, a man will give all that he has for his life. <sup>5</sup>But just put out your hand now, and touch his

<sup>1</sup> <sup>13</sup> Lit., and it came to pass on a day.

<sup>k</sup> <sup>13</sup> So one Heb. MS., Syr., and the parallel in 4. Heb. here adds *wine*.

<sup>1</sup> <sup>15</sup> The Sabceans dwelt in southwestern Arabia and had attained to a high civilization. Nowhere else in the O.T. do they figure as robbers. Possibly they represent Arabs in general.

<sup>m</sup> <sup>14</sup> Probably, as in I Kgs. 18<sup>28</sup> and II Kgs. 1<sup>15</sup>, a flash of lightning.

<sup>n</sup> <sup>17</sup> The Chaldeans dwelt in early times in the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley near the Persian Gulf, and only in later times conquered Babylonia. They attained their greatest power between 605 and 538 B.C.

<sup>o</sup> <sup>17</sup> I. e., so as to approach the camels from different sides and thus capture them; cf. for similar nomadic tactics, the capture of Ai, Gideon's attack against the Midianite camp, and the plan of battle which Joab used effectively against the Ammonites.

<sup>p</sup> <sup>18</sup> Correcting the Heb. by the aid of the parallels in 16, 17.

<sup>q</sup> <sup>18</sup> So two Heb. MSS., Gk., and Syr., and the parallel in 4. Heb. adds *wine*, as in 14.

<sup>r</sup> <sup>19</sup> Lit., from the other side of. Most of the storms in the wilderness are cyclonic in character.

<sup>s</sup> <sup>21</sup> Following certain Heb. MSS. in correcting the traditional reading.

<sup>t</sup> <sup>22</sup> The text has evidently been modified here. The Syr., *revile*, satisfies the context and is probably original.

<sup>u</sup> <sup>2</sup> Heb. adds, to present himself before Jehovah, but Gk. omits as in 18.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>24</sup> Cf. the similar idiom, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The implication is that the test had not been fundamental, for only external possessions had been involved.

## SUFFERING A TEST OF PIETY

bone and his flesh; he certainly will curse<sup>w</sup> you to your face.' 'Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'See, he is in your power; only, spare his life.'

'So the Adversary left the presence of Jehovah, and afflicted Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head with leprosy<sup>x</sup> so terrible<sup>8</sup> that he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself.

Afflicted  
with vile  
leprosy

As he sat among the ashes, 'his wife said to him, 'Are you still holding to your piety? Curse<sup>w</sup> God and die.' 'But he said to her, 'You speak like a senseless woman.<sup>y</sup> We accept prosperity from God, shall we not also accept misfortune?' In all this Job said nothing that was wrong.

Tempted  
by his  
wife

<sup>11</sup>When Job's three friends heard of all this<sup>z</sup> misfortune that had befallen him, they came each from his own home: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, for they had arranged to go together and show their sympathy<sup>a</sup> for him and comfort him. <sup>12</sup>But when they saw him in the distance, they did not at first recognize him. Then they all wept aloud and tore their robes and threw dust upon their heads.<sup>b</sup> <sup>13</sup>Then they sat down with him on the ground<sup>c</sup> seven days and seven nights<sup>c</sup> without any one saying a word to him, for they saw that his anguish was intense.

Visited  
by his  
friends

[Then,<sup>d</sup> moved at the sight of Job's affliction, they broke out with loud lamentations and withheld not bitter complaints of the injustice of God. And Eliphaz the Temanite said, 'It is useless to serve God. And what gain is it to Job that he has kept his charge, and that he has walked blamelessly before him? Even now we call the proud happy, and those who work iniquity thrive; yea, they tempt God and escape. Why, O Job, do you still remain steadfast in your piety? It were better to curse God and die.'

Continu-  
ation of  
the folk-  
tale

But Job was greatly displeased, and spoke to them, saying:

You speak as men without wisdom,  
In whose heart there is no fear of God.  
Bitter is the pain that wracks me,  
But more bitter are the words which you utter.  
Blessed be Jehovah for that which he gave me;  
And now that I am bereft, blessed be his name.  
I will call to him in my distress and say,  
Show me clearly wherein I have erred,  
And let me not depart under the weight of thine anger;  
For God is good to all who call upon him,  
And he will not suffer the righteous to fall forever.]

<sup>w</sup> 25. <sup>8</sup> Lit., *bless*, as in 1<sup>s</sup>. <sup>11</sup>.

<sup>x</sup> 27 Reference is probably to the loathsome and incurable tubercular leprosy, which takes the form of swellings that afflict all parts of the body and break out in festering sores. This diagnosis is confirmed by the statement, *from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head*.

<sup>y</sup> 210 Slightly correcting the Heb.

<sup>z</sup> 211 Gk. and Lat. omit *this*.

<sup>a</sup> 211 Lit., *sway back and forth*, as the Oriental does in expressing grief.

<sup>b</sup> 212 Heb. adds *toward heaven*, but Gk. omits.

<sup>c</sup> 213 Gk. omits *on the ground and seven nights*.

<sup>d</sup> The passage enclosed in brackets is an imaginary reconstruction of what may be supposed to have followed in the original story of Job (cf. *Introd.*, p. 36). It forms a bridge between the Prologue and the Epilogue quite different from the present poem, showing how the poet, like Shakespear, was able to make profound and undying literature out of a simple folk-story. For the rest of the story, cf. § 28.



# THE LYRIC DRAMA OF JOB

## THE LYRIC DRAMA OF JOB

### § 1. Job's Utter Woe, Job 3

Better  
never to  
have  
been  
born

**Job 3**

<sup>a</sup>Then<sup>a</sup> Job began<sup>b</sup> to speak and said:

<sup>3</sup>Let the day perish which gave me birth,

And the night when they said, 'A man child is born!'<sup>c</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Let that day be utter darkness,

Let God<sup>d</sup> not regard it from above.

Let no ray of light shine upon it,<sup>e</sup>

<sup>5</sup>May gloom and darkness claim it.

Let a cloud settle down upon it,

Let all that make black the day<sup>f</sup> frighten it!

<sup>6</sup>That night! Let thick darkness seize it.

Join it not<sup>g</sup> to the days of the year,

From the list of the months exclude it.

<sup>7</sup>That night!<sup>h</sup> let it ever be barren,<sup>i</sup>

May no joyful shout<sup>j</sup> invade it.

<sup>8</sup>Let those curse it who curse the day,

Who<sup>k</sup> are prepared to rouse up leviathan.<sup>l</sup>

The Lyric Drama of Job.—The setting of this lyric drama is supplied by the old popular prose story of Job found in Job 1-2. The hero, bereft of possessions, of children, and of all that contributes to a man's happiness, sits silently weeping on a refuse heap. Apparently he is afflicted by the loathsome tubercular type of leprosy. He is clad in sackcloth, and in keeping with the Oriental method of expressing grief, is casting ashes upon his bowed head. About him, sitting for seven days and nights in speechless horror, are his friends. As in the old Greek tragedies, the drama is staged out under the blue canopy of heaven. The action is almost wholly subjective. Job first speaks, and then in turn each of his friends. The progress is wholly within the mind of Job himself. His words and gestures alone reveal the mighty tempests that sweep over his soul. As the drama unfolds, his mood becomes calmer, until in chaps. 29-31 he develops a masterly résumé of his case. The only objective action in the play is the approach of the great, low-lying thunder-cloud, which draws near at the close of the drama. From its depths comes the majestic voice of Jehovah. The divine message is not a direct reply to Job's complaint. Instead, the Almighty calls upon Job to open his eyes and behold the evidences of divine wisdom and care revealed in the animate and inanimate world which surrounds him on every side. Before this transcendent vision of God's omniscience and goodness Job bows in deepest reverence, forgetting his personal sorrows, which a few moments before had completely clouded his vision of the Almighty.

§ 1 As Duhm has pointed out (*Hibb* 17), the author shows great tact in making his hero do what the great prophet Jer. had already done, Jer. 20<sup>14-18</sup>. The dependence in language as well as in thought upon this earlier passage is clear. Jer.'s words are simpler and more natural. The author of Job has heightened the picture at many points. In cursing the day that he was born, Job portrays dramatically his overwhelming grief and utter despair. By this impassioned utterance Job at once assumes a very different rôle from the hero of the prose story. His pent-up agony and indignation at last find full expression. Above all, he questions by implication God's justice, and thus rouses his friends to turn upon him and voice the suspicions that their silence had implied.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>32</sup> Heb. inserts before this (apparently as a title for the chapter), <sup>1</sup>After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day (i. e., the day of his birth).

<sup>b</sup> <sup>32</sup> The Heb. is usually translated, *answered*. Probably for this reason the Gk. and Lat. omit the word, but it is often used in the sense given above.

<sup>c</sup> <sup>33</sup> So practically all the VSS. Heb., *the night which said, A man child is conceived*. Cf. Jer. 20<sup>15</sup>. The traditional Heb. is clearly corrupt.

<sup>d</sup> <sup>34</sup> In the poetic sections the word *Eloah* (God) is put in the mouth of the Edomite hero of the drama, not the distinctively Heb. title of the deity, *Jehovah*.

<sup>e</sup> <sup>34</sup> I. e., May no sun or star light it up, but may it remain clothed in blackness, the possession of chaos.

<sup>f</sup> <sup>35</sup> Or *the deep gloom of day*. The VSS. vary widely in the rendering, and none are satisfactory. The reference is probably to an eclipse.

<sup>g</sup> <sup>36</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. with the aid of Sym., Targ., and the demands of the context; cf. also Gen. 49<sup>6</sup>. Job would have his birthday erased from the calendar.

<sup>h</sup> <sup>37</sup> So one Heb. MS., Gk., Syr., and Lat. Heb. adds, destroying the regular metre, *behold*.

<sup>i</sup> <sup>37</sup> Lit., *story*.

<sup>j</sup> <sup>37</sup> I. e., over the birth of a child.

<sup>k</sup> <sup>38</sup> I. e., the magicians and sorcerers who were supposed to be able to arouse the leviathan.

<sup>l</sup> <sup>38</sup> The traditional monster of the great deep that represented chaos and the foes of light. It was thought of as capable of causing an eclipse.

## JOB'S UTTER WOE

- <sup>9</sup>Let the stars of its sunrise be dark,  
 Let it wait for light, but have none,  
 Let it not see the eyelids of the dawn.<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>For it closed not the doors of my mother's womb,  
 Nor hid trouble from my eyes.  
<sup>11</sup>Why did I not die at birth,<sup>n</sup>  
 Breathe my last when I came from the womb?<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>Or<sup>p</sup> why was I not as a hidden untimely birth,  
 As infants that never saw light?  
<sup>12</sup>Why did the knees receive me,<sup>q</sup>  
 Or the breasts, that I should suck?  
<sup>13</sup>I should then have lain down in quiet,  
 Should have slept and been at rest  
<sup>14</sup>With kings and counsellors of earth  
 Who built themselves great pyramids;<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>With princes rich in gold,  
 Who filled their houses with silver.

- <sup>17</sup>There the wicked cease from troubling,<sup>s</sup>  
 There the weary are at rest;  
<sup>18</sup>Captives too at ease together,<sup>t</sup>  
 Hearing not the voice of masters.  
<sup>19</sup>There the small and great are gathered,  
 And the slave is free from his master.  
<sup>20</sup>Why is light given<sup>u</sup> the wretched,  
 And life to the bitter in soul,  
<sup>23</sup>To a man<sup>v</sup> whose way is hid,  
 To him whom God has hedged in,  
<sup>21</sup>Those who long for death, but it comes not,  
 And dig for it<sup>w</sup> as<sup>x</sup> for hid treasure.  
<sup>22</sup>Who are beside themselves with joy, if they discover it,  
 And are glad when they find the grave?<sup>y</sup>  
<sup>24</sup>For sighs take the place of my food,<sup>z</sup>

Injustice  
of being  
compelled  
to live  
on in  
misery

<sup>m</sup> <sup>30</sup> Dawn is here represented as coming like a fair youth or maiden.

<sup>o</sup> <sup>31</sup> So Gk. and Lat., lit., in the womb. Heb., from.

<sup>p</sup> <sup>32</sup> Heb. idiom, from the womb go forth and expire.

<sup>q</sup> <sup>33</sup> With Duham restoring this vs. to the place where it logically belongs. Vs. <sup>17</sup> is the immediate sequel of <sup>15</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> <sup>34</sup> The reference is to the reception of the new-born child by the father, who in ancient times decided whether or not it should be allowed to live. If he turned it over to the mother or nurse to keep, its life was preserved.

<sup>s</sup> <sup>35</sup> So the Arabic and Coptic. Heb., wastes, ironically referring to the desolate remains of the once proud palaces.

<sup>t</sup> <sup>36</sup> I. e., from their restless, contentious life.

<sup>u</sup> <sup>37</sup> Or as well; i. e., they as well as the wicked tyrants have peace and rest.

<sup>v</sup> <sup>38</sup> So Gk., Syr., Lat., and Targ. Heb., does he give.

<sup>w</sup> <sup>39</sup> This vs. belongs logically after <sup>20</sup> and probably stood here originally.

<sup>x</sup> <sup>40</sup> I. e., seek it intently, even as the natives of Palestine to-day dig frantically for buried treasure.

<sup>y</sup> <sup>41</sup> Following the Gk. and Syr. in slightly correcting the Heb.

<sup>z</sup> <sup>42</sup> So Gk., Eth., and Sah. Syr. and one Heb. MS. read, mound. Possibly the idea is that they are so eager for death that they contemplate with pleasure their funeral mound, cf. Josh. 7<sup>26</sup>, 8<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Heb., for my sighing comes before I eat. The context supports the rendering followed above.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

And my groans are poured out like water.  
<sup>25</sup>For the evil I fear<sup>a</sup> overtakes me,  
 And whatever I dread comes upon me.  
<sup>26</sup>No peace nor quiet have I,  
 No rest, but turmoil comes.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

### § 2. Discourse of Eliphaz: The Impossibility of Any Man's Being Absolutely Righteous, Job 4-5

Job  
 should  
 apply  
 his own  
 teachings

#### Job 4

<sup>1</sup>Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:  
<sup>2</sup>If one ventures a word, will it vex you?  
 But who could refrain from speaking?<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>See! You have instructed many  
 And strengthened the drooping hands.  
<sup>4</sup>Your words have upheld the fallen,  
 Giving strength to<sup>b</sup> tottering knees.  
<sup>5</sup>But now that it comes to you,<sup>c</sup> you are impatient,  
 Now that it touches you, you are dismayed.

Calamity  
 the inev-  
 itable  
 conse-  
 quence  
 of sin

<sup>6</sup>Is not your religion<sup>d</sup> your confidence,  
 Your blameless life<sup>e</sup> your hope?  
<sup>7</sup>Remember! What innocent man ever perished?  
 Or where were the upright ever destroyed?  
<sup>8</sup>As I have observed, those who plough sorrow  
 And sow trouble gather the harvest.  
<sup>9</sup>By the breath of God they perish,  
 And by the blast of his anger are consumed.  
<sup>10</sup>The lion roars and the fierce lion howls,<sup>f</sup>  
 Yet the young lions' teeth are broken.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>11</sup>The old lion perishes for lack of prey,  
 And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.

In God's  
 sight no  
 mortal is  
 absolutely  
 free from  
 sin

<sup>12</sup>Now a message<sup>h</sup> was secretly brought me,  
 And a whisper of it reached my ear,

<sup>a</sup> 3<sup>ss</sup> In 29<sup>18</sup> Job declares that in the days of his prosperity he had no fear of the future. The statement in <sup>ss</sup> is evidently general, not specific.

§ 2 Eliphaz shows great tact. His first object is to encourage Job and to lead him to realize that no man can be absolutely sinless. With rare skill the poet portrays the vague terror that comes from the consciousness of a divine presence and revelation. The language and atmosphere are those of the prophets. The aim is to render more impressive the truth set forth in 4<sup>17-18</sup>, upon which Eliphaz's argument turns: Job is mortal, hence he has sinned. He is now suffering the consequences. Let him acknowledge his sin and escape.

<sup>b</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> Lit., *But to hold back with words who is able?*

<sup>c</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> Lit., *and you have strengthened.*

<sup>d</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> Eliphaz here takes up Job's own words and confession.

<sup>e</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> Lit., *fear.* The word is used in a technical sense by Eliphaz, cf. 15<sup>4</sup>, 22<sup>4</sup>, and is equivalent to piety or religion.

<sup>f</sup> 4<sup>5</sup> Lit., *the integrity of your ways; i. e., the rightness of your conduct.*

<sup>g</sup> 4<sup>10</sup> Lit., *the roar of the lion and the voice of the howler!*

<sup>h</sup> 4<sup>10</sup> I. e., first they roar and beget terror, but suddenly their power is broken.

<sup>b</sup> 4<sup>12</sup> Lit., *a thing, or word (of God), was brought by stealth.*

# ELIPHAZ

- <sup>13</sup>In thoughts from the visions of night,  
When deep sleep falls upon men;  
<sup>14</sup>Fear came upon me, and trembling,  
That made my bones all quake.  
<sup>15</sup>Then a spirit passed before me,  
The hair of my flesh stood on end.  
<sup>16</sup>It stood still,<sup>i</sup>  
But I could not discern its appearance;  
A form was before my eyes;  
In the silence I heard a voice:<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>"Can mortal man be just before God?  
Can one be pure before his Maker?  
<sup>18</sup>Even his servants he does not trust,  
And his angels he charges with error;<sup>k</sup>  
<sup>19</sup>How much more those who dwell in clay houses,  
Whose very foundation is dust,<sup>l</sup>  
Who, like the moth, are crushed,<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Between morning and evening destroyed,  
Unobserved, they perish forever.  
<sup>21</sup>Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?  
They die, and that without wisdom."

- 5 <sup>1</sup>Call! Is there any who will answer you?  
And to which of the holy ones<sup>n</sup> will you turn?  
<sup>2</sup>For vexation kills the fool,  
And envy slays the silly.  
<sup>3</sup>I have seen the fool taking root,  
But suddenly his habitation rotted down.<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>His children are far from safety,  
Crushed in the gate with no deliverer;<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>His harvest the hungry eat up,  
And the thirsty are eager for his wealth.<sup>q</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>For affliction does not come from the dust,  
And trouble does not spring out of the ground;  
<sup>7</sup>But man himself begets trouble,<sup>r</sup>

Disaster  
overtakes  
the  
foolish,  
but not  
without  
cause

<sup>i</sup> <sup>410</sup> Possibly this incomplete line is secondary, but its very brevity may be a part of the poet's art.

<sup>j</sup> <sup>418</sup> Lit., *Silence, and I heard a voice.*

<sup>k</sup> <sup>418</sup> The Heb. word occurs nowhere else.

<sup>l</sup> <sup>419</sup> The reference is clearly to the older account of man's creation found in Gen. 2.

<sup>m</sup> <sup>410</sup> This line is doubtful and may be secondary. The reading is based on Gk., Syr., and Sah.

<sup>n</sup> <sup>51</sup> *L. e.*, angels.

<sup>o</sup> <sup>51</sup> So Gk., Syr., Sah., and a revised Heb. text. Heb., *I cursed*, appears to be corrupt.

<sup>p</sup> <sup>54</sup> *I. e.*, unjust decisions were rendered by the judges, whose court was usually by the city gate. *In the gate* may be a later explanatory gloss, for it makes the line too long.

<sup>q</sup> <sup>55</sup> This vs. has suffered in transmission, as the many variant readings of the VSS. indicate. Through confusion an impossible third line has grown up. Deleting it, the original vs. appears. Duhm (*Hiob* 31), following Aquila, Sym., Syr., and Lat. in correcting the Heb., radically revises so as to read for these two lines, *He who is thirsty drains water out of their spring; i. e.*, because it is so deserted.

<sup>r</sup> <sup>57</sup> Heb., *man is born to trouble*, but this contradicts <sup>6</sup>.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

It is best  
to trust  
one's case  
to the  
omni-  
scient  
ruler of  
the uni-  
verse

Even as the sparks<sup>a</sup> fly upward.

<sup>8</sup>But as for me, I would seek God

And to him would commit my cause,

<sup>9</sup>Who does things great and unsearchable,

Marvellous and without number;

<sup>10</sup>Who gives rain on the earth,

And sends waters upon the fields;<sup>†</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Who sets<sup>‡</sup> the lowly on high,

And those who mourn are exalted to safety.

<sup>12</sup>He frustrates the plans of the crafty,

So that their hands cannot achieve success.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>13</sup>He takes the wise in their craftiness,<sup>‡</sup>

And the counsel of the wily is overthrown.<sup>‡</sup>

<sup>14</sup>They meet with darkness in the day-time,

And grope at noonday as in the night.

<sup>15</sup>But he saves the poor<sup>‡</sup> from the sword,

And the needy from the hand of the mighty,

<sup>16</sup>So that the poor man has hope,

And iniquity stops her mouth.

<sup>17</sup>Happy<sup>‡</sup> the man whom God corrects;

Therefore spurn not the Almighty's chastening.

<sup>18</sup>For he causes pain but to comfort,

And wounds that his hands may heal.

<sup>19</sup>From countless<sup>a</sup> troubles he will deliver you,

Whatever comes,<sup>a</sup> no evil shall touch you;

<sup>20</sup>In famine he will redeem you from death,

In time of war from the might of the sword.

<sup>21</sup>You shall be hid from<sup>b</sup> the scourge of the tongue;

You shall not fear when destruction comes.

<sup>22</sup>At ruin and want you shall laugh,

You shall have no fear of wild beasts,

<sup>23</sup>You shall be in league with the stones,

And at peace with the beasts of the field.

<sup>24</sup>You shall know that your tent is secure,

Submis-  
sion to  
his disci-  
pline  
insures  
peace and  
prosperity

<sup>a</sup> 57 Heb., lit., *children of flame*. Gk. and Sah., *nestlings of the vulture*. The exact reading and meaning are not clear. If the above translation is followed, the meaning is that man is as prone to bring trouble upon himself as the sparks are to fly upward.

<sup>†</sup> 510 Some scholars regard this vs. as secondary because it destroys the close connection between <sup>a</sup> and <sup>‡</sup>.

<sup>‡</sup> 511 So Gk., Lat., and Sah. Heb., *In that he sets up*.

<sup>v</sup> 512 The derivation of this word is not certain, but it occurs again in 6<sup>12</sup>, where it appears to mean *abiding wisdom*. Here it describes the fruits of wisdom.

<sup>w</sup> 513 This line is quoted in I Cor. 3<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>‡</sup> 514 Lit., *hastens itself, or is hastened*, and so *rushes to its downfall*.

<sup>v</sup> 515 Supplying the word demanded by the context. Heb., *from their mouth*, is clearly a corruption of the original. Gk. and Sah. render, *But they perish in war and are unable to escape from the conqueror*; but this makes little sense.

<sup>a</sup> 517 So five Heb. MSS., Gk., Syr., and Lat. Heb. inserts *behold*, but this destroys the metre and adds nothing to the context.

<sup>a</sup> 519 Lit., *siz . . . yea, seven*. Cf. Pr. 30<sup>18</sup>, 21, 24, 29, Am. 1<sup>8</sup>, 6, 9, 11, 16.

<sup>b</sup> 521 So Gk., Syr., and Lat. Heb., *in*. The allusion is to slander. Possibly the original read, *pestilence*. Cf. for a close parallel, Ezek. 5<sup>17</sup>, 14<sup>21</sup>.



## ELIPHAZ

- You shall visit your fold, and miss nothing.  
<sup>25</sup>You shall know your descendants<sup>o</sup> are many,  
 And your offspring as grass of the earth.  
<sup>26</sup>You shall die in a ripe old age,  
 As a sheaf garnered in its season.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>27</sup>Consider this,—we have found it so;  
 Hear it, and know it yourself.

### § 3. Job's Reply: The Grounds of His Complaint, Job 6-7

#### Job 6

- <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:  
<sup>2</sup>Oh, that my grief were carefully weighed;  
 All my calamities<sup>e</sup> laid in the scales!  
<sup>3</sup>For they would outweigh the sand of the sea;  
 Therefore it is that my words have been rash.  
<sup>4</sup>For the arrows of God the Almighty have pierced me,<sup>f</sup>  
 My spirit drinks their deadly poison,  
 The terrors of God<sup>g</sup> are arrayed against me.  
<sup>5</sup>Does the wild ass bray as he munches the grass,  
 And over their fodder do oxen low?<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>Can a man eat what is tasteless and saltless?  
 Is there any taste in the white of an egg?<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>My appetite refuses to touch them;<sup>j</sup>  
 They are as loathsome food<sup>k</sup> to me.  
<sup>8</sup>Oh, that my request might be granted,  
 And that God would give me my heart's desire,  
<sup>9</sup>Even that he would consent to crush me,  
 Would let loose his hand and cut me off!  
<sup>10</sup>Then this<sup>l</sup> would be my consolation,  
 I would exult<sup>m</sup> amid pain unsparing.<sup>n</sup>

Crushing  
character  
of Job's  
affliction

No solace  
in the  
words of  
his  
friends

Sigh for  
deliver-  
ance by  
death

<sup>o</sup> 5<sup>25</sup> Lit., *seed*.

<sup>d</sup> 5<sup>26</sup> *I. e.*, with body still vigorous.

§ 3 In the first part of his reply, 6<sup>1-19</sup>, Job in his anguish and desperation stoutly maintains his right to complain. He has been stripped of all that men count worth while, and even death is denied him. To make his woe complete, his friends have failed to give him that sympathy in his hour of mortal agony which is friendship's noblest gift, 6<sup>14-30</sup>. Instead, they have cruelly repeated over him their cold dogmas, which they are more eager to defend than they are to save the innocent or succor the perishing. In 7<sup>1-10</sup> he pathetically describes the utter tragedy of his lot, with no hope in this life nor in the life beyond the grave. In the remainder of the chapter, 7<sup>11-21</sup>, he frankly gives free rein to his rage. In bitter indignation he turns upon the divine Ruler, whom he once regarded as his Friend, and charges him with cruel injustice. For the moment a shadow of doubt regarding his true innocence beclouds his vision, 20-21; but even if he has sinned, why does his divine persecutor show him no mercy?

<sup>e</sup> 6<sup>2</sup> So the VSS. and the marginal reading of the Heb.

<sup>f</sup> 6<sup>4</sup> Lit., *are with me*.

<sup>g</sup> 6<sup>4</sup> For the figure of the terrors of God, cf. Ps. 88<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> 6<sup>5</sup> Cf. the similar type of teaching adopted by Amos in 3<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> 6<sup>6</sup> So Jewish rabbis; many modern scholars translate, *juice of purslain* (a plant which produces an insipid, slimy substance).

<sup>j</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> Gk., *My wrath cannot be quieted*.

<sup>k</sup> 6<sup>7</sup> Gk., *as the smell of a lion*.

<sup>l</sup> 6<sup>10</sup> So three Heb. MSS., Targ., and Lat. Heb., *still*.

<sup>m</sup> 6<sup>10</sup> Lit., *leap in joy*.

<sup>n</sup> 6<sup>10</sup> The line that follows in the Heb., *For I denied not the words of the Holy One*, is evidently a later scribal addition. It breaks into the course of Job's thought and is contrary to the facts.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Patience  
under  
such  
afflictions  
is im-  
possible  
for a  
mortal

Faith-  
lessness  
of his  
friends  
in his  
time of  
worst  
need

Their  
inability  
to bring  
any valid  
charge of  
sin

<sup>11</sup>What strength have I, that I should endure?  
And what is my future, that I should be patient?

<sup>12</sup>Is my strength the strength of stones,  
Or is my body made<sup>o</sup> of brass?

<sup>13</sup>See, I have no help in myself,<sup>p</sup>  
And the power to succeed is driven from me.

<sup>14</sup>A friend should be kind to one fainting,  
Though he lose his faith in the Almighty.<sup>q</sup>

<sup>15</sup>My brothers have been as a treacherous brook,  
As streams that overflow their banks,

<sup>16</sup>Which are turbid because of the melting ice,  
And the snow that hides itself within them.

<sup>17</sup>But when it is warm, they vanish,  
When hot, their channels are dry.

<sup>18</sup>Caravans turn their course to them,  
They go up through the waste, and perish.

<sup>19</sup>The caravans of Tema<sup>r</sup> looked,  
The companies of Sheba waited for them.

<sup>20</sup>They were disappointed<sup>s</sup> because they hoped;<sup>t</sup>  
They came to them, but were dumbfounded.

<sup>21</sup>Even so you have been to me;<sup>u</sup>  
You see the terror<sup>v</sup> and fear.

<sup>22</sup>Have I said, 'Bring me a present,'  
Or, 'Give me a gift from your wealth;

<sup>23</sup>Save me from the hand of a foe;  
From the power of the tyrant redeem me<sup>?</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Teach me, and I will keep silent.  
Show me how I have erred.

<sup>25</sup>How forcible<sup>w</sup> are upright words!  
What does your reproof reprove?

<sup>26</sup>Do you mean to rebuke mere words?  
The words of the desperate are as wind.

<sup>o</sup> 6<sup>12</sup> Supplying the verb required by the metre and implied by the context.

<sup>q</sup> 6<sup>13</sup> Following Syr. and Lat. The Heb. is of uncertain meaning and probably corrupt.

<sup>r</sup> 6<sup>14</sup> Lit., *fear of the Almighty*, a term here as elsewhere in Job equivalent to religion and its demands. Syr. and Lat. read,

*He who refuses kindness to his friend,  
Forsakes the fear of the Almighty.*

Barton (Book of Job 94) suggests the reading,

*To one who is denied kindness from his friend,  
Even he (sic) forsakes the fear of the Almighty.*

<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>19</sup> In an oasis in northern Arabia; Sheba was in the south.

<sup>t</sup> 6<sup>20</sup> This verb is usually translated, *put to shame*, but it expresses both ideas.

<sup>u</sup> 6<sup>20</sup> So the superior reading of the Syr. and Targ.

<sup>v</sup> 6<sup>21</sup> This vs. is evidently corrupt. The above revision is in part supported by the marginal reading and one Heb. MS., and by Gk. and Syr.

<sup>w</sup> 6<sup>21</sup> *I. e.*, my terrible fate.

<sup>x</sup> 6<sup>22</sup> So Targ. and one Heb. MS.

# JOB

<sup>27</sup>You would fall<sup>x</sup> on a blameless man,<sup>y</sup>  
 And make an assault on<sup>a</sup> your friend.  
<sup>28</sup>Now be pleased to look upon me:  
 I would surely not lie to your face.  
<sup>29</sup>Turn back, let there be no injustice;  
 Turn back, for right is still with me.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>30</sup>Is there injustice on my tongue?  
 Can I<sup>b</sup> not discern what is evil?

7 <sup>1</sup>Has not man a hard service<sup>c</sup> on earth,  
 Whose days are like those of a hireling?<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>As a slave who pants for the shadows,<sup>d</sup>  
 As a hireling who looks for his wage,<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>So fruitless months are my lot,<sup>f</sup>  
 And wearisome nights are appointed me.  
<sup>4</sup>Whenever I lie down, I say:  
<sup>5</sup>'When will day come, that I may arise?'<sup>g</sup>  
 I am full of unrest till the dawn.

Misery  
and  
transitori-  
ness of  
human  
life

<sup>6</sup>Worms and clods of dust<sup>h</sup> clothe my flesh;  
 My skin grows hard, then breaks.<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>My days are swifter<sup>j</sup> than weavers' thread,<sup>k</sup>  
 And are spent without any hope.  
<sup>8</sup>Oh remember that my life is but a breath;  
 My eye shall see happiness no more.  
<sup>9</sup>The eye of him who sees me shall look on me no more;  
 Thine eyes shall be upon me, but I shall not be.  
<sup>10</sup>As the cloud is consumed and is gone,  
 So he shall never come back  
 Who goes down to the home of the dead.<sup>l</sup>  
<sup>11</sup>He shall never return to his house,  
 His place shall know him no more.  
<sup>12</sup>So I will not restrain my mouth;  
 I will speak in anguish of spirit,  
 I will complain in bitterness of soul.

No  
return  
from  
Sheol

<sup>x</sup> 627 Following Gk. and Lat. Heb., *cast lots*.

<sup>y</sup> 627 Slightly revising as demanded by the context. Heb., *over the fatherless*.

<sup>a</sup> 627 So Gk. Heb., *make merchandise of*.

<sup>b</sup> 628 Heb., *my righteousness is in it*. The above reading is obtained by a slight revision. Or we may read, *let righteousness come*.

<sup>c</sup> 628 Lit., *my palate*.

<sup>d</sup> 71 Lit., *a period of enforced military service*, cf. Is. 40<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> 72 I. e., for the time when he can rest from his labor.

<sup>f</sup> 72 I. e., in Job's case death.

<sup>g</sup> 73 Lit., *I am made to inherit*; i. e., without any choice.

<sup>h</sup> 74 Slightly correcting the text. Heb., *When shall I arise and the night be gone?*

<sup>i</sup> 75 Of dust is possibly an explanatory gloss, as the line is unusually long.

<sup>j</sup> 76 I. e., with the sores that characterized leprosy.

<sup>k</sup> 76 Or *lighter*; i. e., they break easily and come to an end.

<sup>l</sup> 76 Heb., *weaver*. Inasmuch as there is no evidence that shuttles were used by the early Heb. weavers, it is probable that the author had in mind simply the flying thread.

<sup>1</sup> 76 As the steel to the magnet, Job constantly reverts to the question of the future life.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

God  
pitilessly  
persecutes  
man

- <sup>12</sup>Am I a sea, or a sea-monster,<sup>m</sup>  
That thou settest a watch over me?  
<sup>13</sup>When I say, 'My bed shall give comfort,  
My couch shall ease my complaint,'  
<sup>14</sup>Then thou frightest me with dreams,  
And terrifiest me through visions,  
<sup>15</sup>So that I myself choose strangling,  
And death rather than my pains.<sup>n</sup>
- <sup>16</sup>I loathe<sup>o</sup> life, I would not go on living,  
Let me be, for my days are but breath;  
<sup>17</sup>What is man,<sup>p</sup> that thou dost exalt him,  
That thou thinkest of him at all,  
<sup>18</sup>Remembering him each morning,  
And testing him every moment?<sup>q</sup>  
<sup>19</sup>How long<sup>r</sup> wilt thou not look away from me  
And let me alone till I swallow my spittle?<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>If I sin, then how does that harm thee,<sup>t</sup>  
O Watcher of men?  
Why hast thou made me thy target?  
Why am I a burden to thee?<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>21</sup>Why dost thou not pardon my guilt,<sup>v</sup>  
And overlook mine iniquity?  
For now I shall lie in the dust;  
When thou seekest me, I shall not be!

If a man  
sins, why  
does not  
God  
pardon?

### § 4. Discourse of Bildad: God Always Recompenses According to Man's Deserts, Job 8

- Job 8**      <sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:  
<sup>2</sup>How long will you speak such things,  
And your words be mere blustering wind?<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>Is God a perverter of justice?  
Or can the Almighty do wrong?

God  
cannot  
be un-  
just;  
rather he  
deals im-  
partially  
with all  
according  
to their  
acts

<sup>m</sup> 7<sup>12</sup> Clearly the poet has in mind the old Semitic myth of the contest of the creating God with Tiamat, the great monster that represented primeval chaos.

<sup>n</sup> 7<sup>15</sup> Slightly revising the Heb., which reads *bones*. Possibly the Heb. is original.

<sup>o</sup> 7<sup>16</sup> In 9<sup>21</sup> the same verb is used with *life*, which Heb. here omits.

<sup>p</sup> 7<sup>17</sup> A bitter parody of Ps. 8<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>q</sup> 7<sup>18</sup> As one who is ever watching and investigating man's actions.

<sup>r</sup> 7<sup>19</sup> So the VSS.

<sup>s</sup> 7<sup>19</sup> *Let me swallow my saliva* (meaning *Wait a minute*) is a common expression among the Arabs to-day.

<sup>t</sup> 7<sup>20</sup> Lit., *what do I to thee?* The preceding words, *if I sin*, destroy the metrical balance of the vs. and may have been inserted by a scribe who had in mind <sup>u</sup> and did not understand the logical development of the thought.

<sup>u</sup> 7<sup>20</sup> So two Heb. MSS., Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *to myself*.

<sup>v</sup> 7<sup>21</sup> Here for a moment Job doubts his own innocence.

§ 4 Bildad is the traditionalist whose outlook is backward and who sees virtue in the past alone. He has no regard for the evidence of present experience. Hence there is no place in his thought for new truth. Job's intemperate words are in Bildad's mind convincing evidence of guilt. His only aim, therefore, is by highly colored and contrasting pictures to point out to Job the sudden judgment that awaits wrongdoing and the happy fortune of the righteous. Like every traditional dogmatist, he is not always logical.

<sup>w</sup> 8<sup>1</sup> *I. e.*, like a destructive tempest.

## BILDAD

<sup>4</sup>If your children sinned against him,  
 He has let them suffer the penalty;  
<sup>5</sup>But you should<sup>x</sup> earnestly seek him,  
 And supplicate the Almighty.  
<sup>6</sup>If you are pure and upright,<sup>y</sup>  
 He will now answer your prayer,  
 And will prosper your righteous abode.  
<sup>7</sup>And though your beginning be small,  
 Your latter end shall be increasingly glorious.  
<sup>8</sup>For inquire now of past generations,  
 And note what the fathers<sup>z</sup> have searched out;  
<sup>9</sup>For we are of yesterday, and know nothing,  
 Our days upon earth are like<sup>a</sup> a shadow.<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>Will they not teach you and<sup>c</sup> tell you,  
 And speak words that come from their heart?

Con-  
firmed  
by the  
testimony  
of the  
past

<sup>11</sup>Can papyrus grow up without mire?  
 Can the reed-grass<sup>d</sup> thrive without water?  
<sup>12</sup>While still green and uncut,  
 Of all herbs, it withers most quickly.  
<sup>13</sup>So end all who forget their God,  
 So the hope<sup>e</sup> of the godless man perishes,  
<sup>14</sup>Whose stupid confidence is shattered,<sup>f</sup>  
 And whose trust is a spider's web.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>He leans upon his house, but it does not stand,  
 He seizes hold of it, but it does not endure.  
<sup>16</sup>He grows green in the light of<sup>h</sup> the sun,  
 And over his garden shoots go forth.  
<sup>17</sup>Over the spring<sup>i</sup> his roots are entwined,  
 He looks upon the house of stones.<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>18</sup>If he is destroyed from his place,  
 Then it denies him, saying, 'I have not seen you.'  
<sup>19</sup>So<sup>k</sup> this is the destruction<sup>l</sup> of his way,  
 And from the dust another springs.<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Surely God will not cast out a perfect man,

All are  
depend-  
ent upon  
God, who  
cuts down  
the guilty  
and vin-  
dicates  
the  
righteous

<sup>x</sup> <sup>85</sup> So Gk. Heb., *If you would*.  
<sup>y</sup> <sup>86</sup> Heb. adds the awkward line, *Surely now he will awake for you*. The Gk., Sah., and Eth. do not have this, but read as above.  
<sup>z</sup> <sup>87</sup> So Gk. and Lat. and the demands of the context. Heb., *their fathers*.  
<sup>a</sup> <sup>88</sup> So Syr.  
<sup>b</sup> <sup>89</sup> It is only the cumulative testimony of the past that counts.  
<sup>c</sup> <sup>90</sup> So VSS. Heb. has lost the *and*.  
<sup>d</sup> <sup>91</sup> This and the word translated papyrus are both Egyptian words.  
<sup>e</sup> <sup>92</sup> So Gk. Heb., *paths*. The idea is that his end is sudden destruction.  
<sup>f</sup> <sup>93</sup> The Heb. is probably corrupt, and the translation is doubtful.  
<sup>g</sup> <sup>94</sup> Cf. Koran, 29<sup>th</sup>, for Mohammed's use of this same expressive figure.  
<sup>h</sup> <sup>95</sup> Lit., *in the presence of*.  
<sup>i</sup> <sup>96</sup> Translating the Heb. as in Sg. of Sgs. 4<sup>th</sup> and as the context suggests.  
<sup>j</sup> <sup>97</sup> So Heb. The expression *house of stones* would naturally refer to the spring. Or, slightly emending the Heb. as suggested by Gk. and one Heb. MS., we may read, *he lives among the stones*.  
<sup>k</sup> <sup>98</sup> Restoring the Heb. by the aid of the Gk., Sah., and Eth.  
<sup>l</sup> <sup>99</sup> Again following the superior Gk. in restoring the Heb., which reads *joy*.  
<sup>m</sup> <sup>100</sup> So Gk., Syr., and one Heb. MS.



## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Nor will he uphold<sup>a</sup> evil-doers.

<sup>21</sup>He will yet fill<sup>o</sup> your mouth with laughter,  
And your lips with shouts of joy.

<sup>22</sup>Your foes shall be clothed with shame,  
And the tent of the wicked shall vanish.

### § 5. Job's Reply: God Condemns the Innocent and Is Pitiless, Job 9-10

#### Job 9

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:

<sup>2</sup>To be sure, I know that it is so;

But how can a man be just before God?

<sup>3</sup>If he should desire to contend with him,

Not one charge in a thousand could he answer.

<sup>4</sup>He is wise in mind and mighty in strength,—

Who has ever defied him and prospered?—

<sup>5</sup>Him who without effort<sup>p</sup> moves mountains,

Overturning them in his anger;

<sup>6</sup>Who shakes the earth out of its place,

So that its pillars tremble;

<sup>7</sup>Who commands the sun and it rises not,

And places a seal on the stars;

<sup>8</sup>Who alone stretches out the heavens,<sup>a</sup>

And treads on the high waves<sup>r</sup> of the sea;

<sup>9</sup>Who makes the Bear and Orion,

The Pleiades<sup>s</sup> and the constellations of the south;<sup>t</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Who does great things past finding out,

Marvellous things without number!<sup>u</sup>

<sup>11</sup>He goes by me, but I do not see him;<sup>v</sup>

He passes on, but I do not perceive him.

<sup>12</sup>When he seizes me, who can prevent him?

Who will ask, 'What doest thou?'

<sup>13</sup>God will not withdraw his anger;

The helpers of Rahab<sup>w</sup> bow beneath him.

Impossi-  
ble for a  
mortal  
man to  
prove his  
innocence  
before the  
Omnipo-  
tent

Though  
innocent,  
he is the  
prey of  
an unjust  
Deity

<sup>a</sup> 8<sup>20</sup> Lit., *hold fast by the hand*.

<sup>o</sup> 8<sup>21</sup> Correcting minor errors in the Heb.

§ 5 In this speech Job's woe reaches its climax. He admits his friends' contention that no man can be just in the sight of God; but, instead of granting their claim that he is guilty, he maintains that the reason is that no finite man can plead his cause before the Infinite, 9<sup>1-12</sup>. Hence, though innocent, he is proved guilty and condemned by his irresponsible Judge, 9<sup>12-25</sup>. In 10 Job transfers the charge from himself to God, and challenges him to explain why he treats the creation of his hand so cruelly and unjustly. God's care for man points to a benign purpose in the work of creation, and the possibility gives Job a little comfort, even though his present tragic lot seems to belie that purpose.

<sup>p</sup> 9<sup>5</sup> So Syr., lit., and does not know it; i. e., without being conscious of it. Heb., and they do not know it.

<sup>q</sup> 9<sup>8</sup> Cf. Is. 44<sup>24</sup> for this idea.

<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>8</sup> Lit., *high places* (cf. Mic. 1<sup>2</sup>). The reference may be to the encircling sea that rested upon the firmament.

<sup>s</sup> 9<sup>9</sup> Cf. Am. 5<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>t</sup> 9<sup>9</sup> Some star or group of stars in the southern heavens, possibly the Southern Cross.

<sup>u</sup> 9<sup>10</sup> A repetition of 5<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>v</sup> 9<sup>11</sup> So VSS. Heb. omits *him*.

<sup>w</sup> 9<sup>13</sup> I. e., the ancient gods and demons who are allied with the primeval monster that in Semitic mythology represented chaos, the foe of order, cf. Vol. I, Appendix III.

# JOB

<sup>14</sup>How much less can I answer him,  
Choose my words against<sup>x</sup> him!  
<sup>15</sup>Though<sup>y</sup> I were right, I could give him no answer,<sup>z</sup>  
But would have to beg mercy from my judge.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>If I called to him, he would make no reply,<sup>b</sup>  
I do not believe he would hear my voice.  
<sup>17</sup>He who crushes me by a fierce tempest,  
And increases my wounds unjustly,  
<sup>18</sup>Does not permit me to catch my breath,  
But fills me full of bitterness.  
<sup>19</sup>Is it a question of strength? He is mighty!<sup>c</sup>  
Or of justice, who will arraign me?<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Though right, my own mouth would condemn me;  
Though blameless, I would be proved guilty.

<sup>21</sup>Blameless I am! I regard not myself;  
I loathe my life; it is all one to me.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>Therefore I openly declare:  
He destroys the blameless as well as the wicked.  
<sup>23</sup>And when the scourge<sup>f</sup> brings sudden death,  
At the despair of the innocent he mocks.  
<sup>24</sup>He has given over the earth to the wicked;  
He veils the faces of its judges;<sup>g</sup>  
If it be not he, who then is it?  
<sup>25</sup>My days<sup>h</sup> are more swift than a runner,<sup>i</sup>  
They flee away, bringing no joy,  
<sup>26</sup>They glide by like ships of papyrus,<sup>j</sup>  
Like vultures that swoop on their prey.  
<sup>27</sup>If I resolve to<sup>k</sup> forget my complaint,  
To cast off my sadness and smile,  
<sup>28</sup>I shudder at all my pains,  
And know that thou wilt not acquit me,  
<sup>29</sup>But that I shall surely be guilty.  
So why should I labor in vain?

Brevity  
of life

Courage  
and  
innocence  
are of no  
avail in  
securing  
justice  
from the  
unattain-  
able  
Judge

<sup>x</sup> <sup>914</sup> Heb., *with*; *i. e.*, in conflict with.

<sup>y</sup> <sup>915</sup> So Gk., Syr. Heb. inserts *whom* at the beginning of the line.

<sup>z</sup> <sup>915</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth., *I should not be answered*.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>915</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth., *his judgment*.

<sup>b</sup> <sup>915</sup> So Gk. Heb., *and he answered me*; possibly this is original, but more probably it is a later toning down of Job's intemperate words.

<sup>c</sup> <sup>919</sup> So Gk., Targ., Sah., and Syr. Heb., *strength of the mighty, behold*.

<sup>d</sup> <sup>919</sup> So Heb. Gk., Syr., *him*. The parallelism supports the VSS., but it may be that the question is supposed to be asked by God; in either case the idea is that no mortal dares summon God before a tribunal. If Heb. is correct and it is Job who speaks, a contrast must be intended: God will prevail if it is only a matter of strength, but if it is a matter of justice, Job will be vindicated.

<sup>e</sup> <sup>921</sup> The short two-beat measure is well adapted to express Job's intense feeling (cf. 54<sup>a</sup> and Nah. 2<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>f</sup> <sup>923</sup> A pestilence or natural calamity.

<sup>g</sup> <sup>924</sup> So that they do not see the truth and render just decisions.

<sup>h</sup> <sup>925</sup> So certain Heb. MSS., Syr., and Lat. Heb., *And my days*.

<sup>i</sup> <sup>925</sup> *I. e.*, a royal messenger. Probably the poet had in mind the swift Persian post.

<sup>j</sup> <sup>925</sup> *I. e.*, swiftly like the light Nile boats.

<sup>k</sup> <sup>927</sup> Lit. (correcting the Heb. with aid of the VSS.), *If I say I will*.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

<sup>30</sup>Though I wash myself with snow,<sup>1</sup>

And cleanse my hands with lye,

<sup>31</sup>Thou wouldst plunge me in the mire,<sup>m</sup>

And my own clothes would abhor me.

<sup>32</sup>Thou art not a man as I am,<sup>n</sup>

That we should come together in judgment.

<sup>33</sup>There is no one between us as arbiter<sup>o</sup>

To lay his hand on us both.

<sup>34</sup>Let him take his rod from off me,

And let not his terrors seize me;

<sup>35</sup>Then would I speak and not fear,

For I am at heart not afraid.

10 <sup>1</sup>In my soul I loathe my life,

I will let my complaint loose against him;<sup>p</sup>

In the bitterness of my soul I will speak,<sup>q</sup>

<sup>2</sup>I will say to God, Do not condemn me;

Show me why thou contendest against me.

<sup>3</sup>Is it well for thee to oppress,

To despise the work of thy hands,

And favor the plan of the wicked?

<sup>4</sup>Hast thou eyes of flesh?

Or seest thou as a man?

<sup>5</sup>Are thy days as the days of a man,

Or thy years as the life of a mortal,

<sup>6</sup>That thou strivest to find out my guilt,

And searchest after my sin,

<sup>7</sup>Though thou knowest that I am not guilty,

And that from thy hand none can deliver?

<sup>8</sup>Thy hands have formed and fashioned me,

And now wilt thou turn<sup>r</sup> and destroy me?

<sup>9</sup>Remember<sup>s</sup> thou madest me as clay;

Wilt thou turn me again into dust?

<sup>10</sup>Hast thou not poured me out as milk,

And curdled me like cheese?

<sup>11</sup>Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,

And knit me with bones and with sinews.

<sup>12</sup>Thou hast granted me life and favor,

Demand  
that God  
reveal the  
hidden  
reason for  
thus per-  
secuting  
the inno-  
cent

Why did  
God give  
so much  
care to  
man's  
creation  
only in  
the end to  
betray  
him?

<sup>1</sup> 930 Certain of the VSS. read, *with waters of snow*.

<sup>m</sup> 931 So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *ditch*.

<sup>n</sup> 932 Heb. adds, *that I should answer him* (i. e., as a defendant in a suit), but this makes the line too long.

<sup>o</sup> 933 Or with thirteen Heb. MSS., Gk., and Syr., *O that there was an arbiter*. Through a common scribal error the particle meaning *would that* has possibly been confused with the very similar Heb. word *not*.

<sup>p</sup> 101 So Gk. and Sah.

<sup>q</sup> 101 Possibly this line was added from 7<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> 103 Following the Gk., Ar., Syr., Sah., and Eth. in reconstructing the corrupt Heb.

<sup>s</sup> 103 So Gk. Heb. adds a word equivalent to our *Please*, but this disturbs the metre, and was probably added by a later scribe who aimed to heighten the picture.

And thy care has guarded my spirit.  
<sup>13</sup>Yet these thou didst hide in thy heart,  
 But I know that this was thy plan.<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>14</sup>If I sin, then thou dost observe me,  
 And refuse to acquit me of guilt.  
<sup>15</sup>Am I wicked? Then woe unto me.  
 Am I just? I cannot lift my head,  
 Full of shame and drunk with sorrow.<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>If I rise,<sup>v</sup> as a lion thou huntest me,  
 Appalling me with fresh marvels.  
<sup>17</sup>Thou dost call new witnesses against me,  
 And makest thy wrath against me still greater,  
 And placest anew hard service upon me.<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>18</sup>Why then didst thou bring me forth from the womb?  
 I would have expired and no eye had seen me.  
<sup>19</sup>I should have been as though I had not been,  
 I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.  
<sup>20</sup>Are not my days few enough?<sup>x</sup>  
 Oh leave me to smile<sup>y</sup> a little,  
<sup>21</sup>Ere I go, no more to return,  
 To the land of the shadow of death,  
<sup>22</sup>To the land as dark as midnight,<sup>z</sup>  
 Where the very light is darkness!

§ 6. Discourse of Zophar: Repentance the Only Means by Which Job May  
 Again Win God's Favor, Job 11

**Job 11** <sup>1</sup>Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:  
<sup>2</sup>Should a torrent<sup>a</sup> of words go unanswered?  
 And should a mere boaster<sup>b</sup> be justified?  
<sup>3</sup>Must men hold their tongues while you babble,  
 And mock, with no one to curb you?<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>For you say, 'My life<sup>d</sup> is pure,  
 And I am clean in thine eyes.'  
<sup>5</sup>But oh, that God would speak,  
 And open his lips against you,

Would  
 that God  
 himself  
 would  
 correct  
 Job's  
 impiety

<sup>a</sup> 10<sup>13</sup> Lit., *with thee*; i. e., thy secret purpose.

<sup>u</sup> 10<sup>15</sup> Lit., *Behold my sorrow!* The above reading is secured by a slight emendation.

<sup>v</sup> 10<sup>16</sup> So Syr., Heb., *If it exalt itself*.

<sup>w</sup> 10<sup>17</sup> Following Gk., Sah., Syr., and Eth. Lit., *renewest the military service*.

<sup>x</sup> 10<sup>20</sup> Reconstructing the corrupt Heb. with the aid of the Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth.

<sup>y</sup> 10<sup>20</sup> Lit., *brighten up*.

<sup>z</sup> 10<sup>22</sup> The text is corrupt. Many regard this vs. as secondary. The above is based on Gk. Heb., through a scribal error, repeats as *blackness*.

§ 6 Zophar, the dogmatist, has no sympathy for Job. Acting on the impulse of his preconceived ideas, he proceeds to call upon God to rebuke Job and teach him the truth that Zophar deems final. Like Eliphaz, at the end he seeks to lure Job on to repentance by picturing glowingly the rewards that will follow repentance.

<sup>a</sup> 11<sup>2</sup> So Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth., supported by parallelism. Heb., *the multitude of words*.

<sup>b</sup> 11<sup>2</sup> Lit., *man of lips*.

<sup>c</sup> 11<sup>3</sup> So Gk., Syr., Ar., and Eth. Heb., *make you ashamed*.

<sup>d</sup> 11<sup>4</sup> So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Ar. Heb., *doctrine*.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

<sup>6</sup>And show you the secrets of wisdom,  
How wonderfully effective they are!<sup>o</sup>  
Then you would know<sup>f</sup> he exacts from you  
Less than your guilt deserves.

<sup>7</sup>Can you probe the real nature of God,  
Discover the Almighty's perfection?  
<sup>8</sup>It is higher than heaven;<sup>g</sup> what can you do?  
Deeper than Hades; what can you know?

<sup>9</sup>Its measure longer than earth,  
And wider than the sea.

<sup>10</sup>If he passes by and imprisons  
And calls to trial,<sup>h</sup> who can stop him?

<sup>11</sup>For he knows men who are false;  
When he sees iniquity, he does not overlook it.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>12</sup>But a senseless man will learn,  
When an ass's colt is born a man!<sup>j</sup>

<sup>13</sup>If you would cleanse<sup>k</sup> your heart,  
And stretch out your hands to God,

<sup>14</sup>And put away sin from your hand,  
And let no wrong dwell in your tent,<sup>l</sup>

<sup>15</sup>You would then<sup>m</sup> lift your face without blemish,  
And you would be steadfast and fearless.

<sup>16</sup>Then you would forget your misery,  
And recall it as floods that have passed.

<sup>17</sup>And your life<sup>n</sup> would be brighter than noonday,  
Your darkness<sup>o</sup> would be like the morning.

<sup>18</sup>You would feel secure, for there is hope;  
You would look about you<sup>p</sup> and rest in safety.

<sup>19</sup>You would lie down, with none to frighten you,  
And many would seek to win your favor.

<sup>20</sup>But the eyes of the wicked fail,  
And they have no way to flee;  
Their only hope is to expire.

---

<sup>o</sup> 11<sup>6</sup> Slightly revising the difficult Heb. The meaning is that the effective divine wisdom can work wonders.

<sup>f</sup> 11<sup>6</sup> So the VSS. Heb., *Know, then*. Possibly the line is secondary; cf. 9<sup>11-12</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> 11<sup>8</sup> So Lat. and Aquila. Heb., *It is high as heaven*.

<sup>h</sup> 11<sup>10</sup> Lit., *call an assembly*; i. e., to pronounce judgment.

<sup>i</sup> 11<sup>11</sup> So Gk. Heb., *he does not consider it*.

<sup>j</sup> 11<sup>12</sup> I. e., never. The current translations of the Heb. are impossible.

<sup>k</sup> 11<sup>13</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *direct aright*.

<sup>l</sup> 11<sup>14</sup> So certain Heb. MSS. and the VSS. Heb., *tents*.

<sup>m</sup> 11<sup>15</sup> So Syr. and Ar. Heb. adds, *surely*.

<sup>n</sup> 11<sup>17</sup> So Gk. Heb. omits *your*.

<sup>o</sup> 11<sup>17</sup> So three Heb. MSS., Syr., and Targ. Heb., *though it were dark*.

<sup>p</sup> 11<sup>19</sup> Even as every Arab searches his tent before retiring; cf. Is. 17<sup>3</sup>.

No guilt  
can  
escape  
the Om-  
nipotent



# JOB

## § 7. Job's Reply: He Is Unjustly Condemned by His Friends; God Must Vindicate Him, Job 12-14

Job 12

<sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:

<sup>2</sup>Verily you are the people,  
And with you wisdom shall die!

<sup>3</sup>But I have a mind as well as you,  
And who does not know all this?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I am as one who is a laughing-stock to his neighbor,—

‘One who called upon God, and he answered!’<sup>r</sup>

The just and perfect man<sup>s</sup> is a laughing-stock.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>5</sup>The man at ease mocks at disaster,  
But it is ready for him whose foot slips.

<sup>6</sup>It is the tents of robbers that prosper,  
And they who provoke God are secure,  
They who carry their God in their hand.<sup>u</sup>

<sup>7</sup>But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;  
And the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;

<sup>8</sup>Or the creatures that crawl on the earth,<sup>v</sup> and they will teach  
you;

The fishes of the sea shall declare to you:

<sup>9</sup>Which of them all does not know  
That the hand of the Lord has done this?—

<sup>10</sup>In whose hand is the life of all that lives  
And the breath of all mankind.

<sup>11</sup>Does not the ear try words,  
As the palate tastes its food?

<sup>12</sup>Does wisdom depend upon years,<sup>w</sup>  
Or insight upon length of life?

<sup>13</sup>With God<sup>x</sup> is wisdom and might;  
Counsel and insight are his.

<sup>14</sup>What he ruins cannot be rebuilt;<sup>y</sup>  
What he imprisons cannot be set free;

<sup>15</sup>When he holds back the floods, they dry up;  
When he sends them on earth, they destroy it.

<sup>16</sup>With him is strength and wisdom;  
Deceived and deceiver are his.<sup>z</sup>

Job's  
retort to  
his sleek,  
self-satis-  
fied  
friends:  
facts  
belie  
their  
thesis

All God's  
creation  
testifies  
to his  
might and  
wisdom

But he  
rules men  
arbi-  
trarily

§ 7 In this long speech Job breaks completely with his friends and their narrow theories of divine procedure. He faces squarely the many examples of injustice that life presents. With biting irony he condemns his friends for trying to misrepresent facts in order to defend God. And yet in the end he appeals from the God of appearances to the God of reality, in whom he almost disbelieves and yet cannot wholly disbelieve.

<sup>a</sup> 12<sup>a</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., through scribal additions from 13<sup>a</sup>, has, *I am not inferior to you*, between the two lines given above.

<sup>r</sup> 12<sup>r</sup> The words on the lips of the scornful friends.

<sup>s</sup> 12<sup>s</sup> So Gk. Heb. omits *and*.

<sup>t</sup> 12<sup>t-10</sup> Duhm and Schmidt regard these vss. as secondary.

<sup>u</sup> 12<sup>u</sup> Heb. reads, *Who brings his God in his hand*; i. e., trusts to his God for power. But this may be, as Siegfried suggests, a corruption for *Who lifts up his hand against God*.

<sup>v</sup> 12<sup>v</sup> Emending the Heb. in accordance with the context.

<sup>w</sup> 12<sup>w</sup> Lit., *is wisdom with aged men?*

<sup>x</sup> 12<sup>x</sup> Heb., *With him*; i. e., God.

<sup>y</sup> 12<sup>y</sup> So Heb. Gk., Syr., Sah., Ar., and Eth., *who will build?*

<sup>z</sup> 12<sup>z</sup> Cf. Is. 45<sup>7</sup>. The Hebrews believed that God was the author of evil as well as of good.

## FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

- <sup>17</sup>He makes counsellors walk barefooted,<sup>a</sup>  
And judges he turns into madmen.  
<sup>18</sup>He looses the bonds of kings<sup>b</sup>  
And binds their own loins with chains.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>19</sup>He makes priests also<sup>d</sup> walk barefooted<sup>e</sup>  
And overpowers the mighty.  
<sup>20</sup>He deprives the trusty of speech,  
Takes away the judgment<sup>e</sup> of elders.  
<sup>21</sup>He pours contempt upon princes,  
And looses the belt of the strong.<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>He reveals the deep things of darkness,  
Brings out to the light the deep gloom.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>23</sup>He makes nations great, then destroys them,  
Expands them, then hems them in.  
<sup>24</sup>Earth's chiefs<sup>h</sup> he deprives of their judgment,  
Makes them wander in trackless wastes,  
<sup>25</sup>Where they grope in utter darkness,  
And stagger<sup>i</sup> like drunken men.

The facts  
are  
obvious  
to every  
one

Job's  
friends  
distort  
the truth  
in their  
effort to  
be the  
cham-  
pions of  
God

Folly of  
trying to  
distort  
truth in  
order to  
vindicate  
God

- 13 <sup>1</sup>My eye has seen all this,<sup>j</sup>  
My ear has heard and noted it.  
<sup>2</sup>What you know, I know also;  
I am not at all inferior to<sup>k</sup> you.  
<sup>3</sup>But I would address the Almighty,  
And I long to reason with God;  
<sup>4</sup>For you are but forgers<sup>l</sup> of lies,  
All of you worthless physicians!  
<sup>5</sup>Oh, that you were but silent!  
That would be wisdom on your part.

- <sup>6</sup>Now listen to my argument,  
And heed the plea of my lips.  
<sup>7</sup>Is it for God you speak falsely,  
For him that you talk deceitfully?  
<sup>8</sup>Will you show him partiality,  
Or be special pleaders for God?  
<sup>9</sup>Were it well if he searched you out?

<sup>a</sup> 12<sup>17</sup>, <sup>18</sup> *I. e.*, leads them captive. The word rendered *barefooted* occurs only in these two *vers.* and Mic. 1<sup>8</sup>. Some commentators hold that <sup>17a</sup> has been mistakenly assimilated to <sup>18a</sup> and should read (as suggested in part by the Gk.), *the counsellors of the land he makes foolish*. This would make a closer parallel to the next line.

<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>18</sup> *I. e.*, the bonds which they place on their subjects.

<sup>c</sup> 12<sup>18</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb., which reads, *a girdle*.

<sup>d</sup> 12<sup>19</sup> Inserting *also* for the sake of the rhythm.

<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>20</sup> *Lit., taste; i. e.*, judgment.

<sup>f</sup> 12<sup>21</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. as the context demands. The trad. Heb. is meaningless.

<sup>g</sup> 12<sup>22</sup> There is nothing in the universe concealed from him.

<sup>h</sup> 12<sup>24</sup> So Gk. Heb., *The chiefs of the people of the land (or earth)*

<sup>i</sup> 12<sup>25</sup> So Gk. Heb., *he makes them reel*.

<sup>j</sup> 13<sup>1</sup> Gk., *Sah.*, and Eth., *these things*.

<sup>k</sup> 13<sup>2</sup> *Lit., fall not before*.

<sup>l</sup> 13<sup>4</sup> *Lit., plasterers*.

## JOB

Can you trick God, as you trick men?  
<sup>10</sup>For he will surely rebuke you,  
 If you secretly show partiality.  
<sup>11</sup>Shall his majesty not overawe you,  
 And dread of him fall upon you?  
<sup>12</sup>Your maxims are proverbs of ashes,  
 Your defenses but works of clay.

<sup>12</sup>Be still<sup>m</sup> that I may speak;  
 Let come to me what may,  
<sup>14</sup>I will<sup>n</sup> take my flesh in my teeth,  
 And place my life in my hand.  
<sup>15</sup>He will slay me; I have no hope,<sup>o</sup>  
 But I will defend my acts to his face.  
<sup>16</sup>This also shall be my salvation,  
 That no godless man would approach him.<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>Give careful heed to my words,  
 As I set them forth in your hearing.  
<sup>18</sup>Now I have prepared my case,  
 I know that I am right.  
<sup>19</sup>Who will contend with me?  
 Then would I be silent and die.  
<sup>20</sup>Only do two things<sup>q</sup> for me;  
 Then from thee I will not hide.  
<sup>21</sup>Withdraw thy hand far from me,  
 And let not thy terror appall me.  
<sup>22</sup>Then call, and I will answer,  
 Or let me speak, and answer me.  
<sup>23</sup>How many are my iniquities?  
 Let me know my guilt and my sin.

Bold  
 protesta-  
 tion of  
 innocence

Appeal to  
 God for  
 justice

<sup>24</sup>Oh, why dost thou hide thy face,  
 And count me as thine enemy?  
<sup>25</sup>Wilt thou harry a wind-blown leaf,  
 Wilt thou chase the withered stubble,  
<sup>26</sup>That thou judgest me so harshly,<sup>r</sup>  
 And repayest the sins of my youth?  
<sup>27</sup>Thou puttest my feet in the stocks,

<sup>m</sup> 13<sup>13</sup> So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb. adds, destroying the metre, *let me alone*.

<sup>n</sup> 13<sup>14</sup> With Gk. omitting *why*, which is repeated from the last clause in <sup>13</sup>, the words for *to me what may* and *why* being almost identical in Heb.

<sup>o</sup> 13<sup>15</sup> The AV translation, *Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him*, is not supported by the Heb. or the context.

<sup>p</sup> 13<sup>16</sup> I, e., his readiness to argue his case before the omnipotent and omniscient Judge is proof of his innocence.

<sup>q</sup> 13<sup>20</sup> The two things which Job desires God to do are specified in <sup>21</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>26</sup> Lit., *wildest bitter things against me*.

# FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

And placest watch over all my paths;  
Thou settest a bound to the soles of my feet.\*

- 14 <sup>1</sup>Man that is born of woman  
Is short-lived<sup>t</sup> and full of trouble.  
<sup>2</sup>He springs up like a flower, then withers;<sup>u</sup>  
He flees like a shadow and stays not.
- 13 <sup>28</sup>And<sup>v</sup> he wastes away as with disease,<sup>w</sup>  
Like a garment eaten by the moths.
- 14 <sup>3</sup>Dost thou notice such a one,  
And bring him<sup>x</sup> to judgment before thee?<sup>y</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>Since his days are determined,  
The number of his months is with thee,  
And thou settest him bounds that he cannot pass.  
<sup>6</sup>Look away from him, and let him have peace,<sup>z</sup>  
To enjoy like a hireling his day.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>For there is hope for a tree,  
Though cut down, it may sprout again,  
<sup>8</sup>And may not cease sending up shoots.  
Though its root grow old in the earth,  
And its stock be dead in the ground,  
<sup>9</sup>It may bud at the scent of water,  
And send up sprouts like a plant.  
<sup>10</sup>But a strong man dies and lies prostrate;  
Man breathes his last, and where is he?<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>11</sup>Like waters gone from the sea,<sup>c</sup>  
Like a river dry and parched,  
<sup>12</sup>He lies down to rise no more,  
Nor awakes<sup>d</sup> till the heavens vanish,  
Nor is<sup>d</sup> ever aroused from his<sup>d</sup> sleep.  
<sup>13</sup>Oh that in the abode of the dead thou wouldst hide me away,  
Conceal me until thine anger be past,  
In thine own set time remember me!

Man has  
no hope  
beyond  
this life

Would  
that God  
might  
vindicate  
his ser-  
vants  
after  
death

\* 13<sup>27</sup> Some scholars, emending the Heb. and connecting with the next vs., read:

*Thou makest a cut about my root,  
<sup>28</sup>So that it decays like a rotten thing.*

It is more satisfactory to transfer <sup>28</sup> to its natural place after 14<sup>2</sup>, as above.

<sup>1</sup> 14<sup>1</sup> Lit., *short of days*.

<sup>u</sup> 14<sup>2</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth., *falls*. Cf. Ps. 103<sup>15-16</sup>, Is. 40<sup>6-8</sup>, and contrast Mt. 6<sup>28-30</sup>.

<sup>v</sup> 13<sup>28</sup> Transposing this vs., with Barton, to its natural position.

<sup>w</sup> 13<sup>28</sup> Emending the Heb., which reads, *like a rotten thing*. Gk., Syr., *like a wine-skin*.

<sup>x</sup> 14<sup>3</sup> So Gk., Syr., Lat., and Sah. Heb., *me*.

<sup>y</sup> 14<sup>3</sup> A Heb. scribe has added in the traditional text the unmetrical and illogical line that separates <sup>3</sup> and <sup>5</sup>: *Oh that a clean thing could come out of an unclean: not one can*. One Heb. MS. omits, as above.

<sup>z</sup> 14<sup>6</sup> Lit., *cease*.

<sup>a</sup> 14<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, look away that he may have a little respite from his continuous labor under the master's eye.

<sup>b</sup> 14<sup>10</sup> So Heb. One MS., Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth., *he is not*.

<sup>c</sup> 14<sup>11</sup> This figure is strikingly illustrated by the shallow seas or ponds and the short-lived rivers or brooks of Palestine.

<sup>d</sup> 14<sup>12</sup> Heb. has the plural.

## JOB

- <sup>14</sup>If a man may die, and live again,<sup>e</sup>  
 I would wait all my days of hard service,  
 Until my release should come.  
<sup>15</sup>Thou wouldst call and I would answer,  
 Thou wouldst yearn for the work of thy hands!  
<sup>16</sup>But now thou countest my steps,  
 And dost not forgive<sup>f</sup> my sin;  
<sup>17</sup>My transgression is sealed in a bag,  
 Thou hast kept on record<sup>g</sup> my guilt.  
<sup>18</sup>But the mountain crumbles to pieces,  
 And the rock is moved from its place;  
<sup>19</sup>The water wears down the stones,  
 The floods wash away the soil;  
 So thou destroyest man's hope,  
<sup>20</sup>And he goes, vanquished by thee, forever;  
 With altered mien, thou dost send him away.  
<sup>21</sup>His sons<sup>b</sup> attain honor, unknown to him,  
 Or shame, but he does not perceive it.  
<sup>22</sup>Only his body is wracked,  
 And the soul within him mourns.

But God  
gives man  
no hope  
beyond  
the grave

## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

### § 8. Eliphaz: Job, Whose Guilt Is Shown by His Words, Should Know the Fate of the Wicked, Job 15

- Job 15**    <sup>1</sup>Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:  
<sup>2</sup>Should a wise man reply with mere bluster,<sup>a</sup>  
 And be full of intemperate speech?  
<sup>3</sup>Should he reason with profitless babble,  
 Or with speeches of no avail?  
<sup>4</sup>See, you are destroying religion,<sup>b</sup>  
 Impairing devout meditation.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>For your wickedness prompts your speech,  
 And you choose the tongue of the crafty.  
<sup>6</sup>Your own mouth condemns you, not I,  
 And your own lips are witness against you.

Job's  
words  
proclaim  
his guilt

• <sup>14</sup><sup>14</sup> Heb., *shall he live?*

<sup>f</sup> <sup>14</sup><sup>16</sup> So Gk. (lit., *pass over*) and the demands of the context. Heb., *watch over*.

<sup>g</sup> <sup>14</sup><sup>17</sup> Lit., *glued up*, "for safe keeping against the day of reckoning" (BDB).

<sup>b</sup> <sup>14</sup><sup>21</sup> The poet here, as in 19<sup>17</sup>, forgets that Job's children are dead.

§ 8 Job's rejection of Eliphaz's counsels and his intemperate words have convinced this oldest and most considerate of the three friends that Job's affliction is not merely for his chastisement but was richly deserved. Hence nothing remains but to point out to him the fate of the wicked in the hope that he may be warned and led to repent.

<sup>a</sup> <sup>15</sup><sup>2</sup> Lit., *knowledge of wind*; i. e., windy knowledge. The eastern winds were from the desert; i. e., hot air.

<sup>b</sup> <sup>15</sup><sup>4</sup> Heb., *fear*, which is here equivalent to religion.

<sup>c</sup> <sup>15</sup><sup>6</sup> The term well describes that mystical contemplation which the Oriental regards as the essence of religion.



## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

In defy-  
ing the  
testimony  
of human  
experi-  
ence and  
in claim-  
ing to be  
innocent

<sup>7</sup>Were you the first man to be born,  
Brought forth before the hills?<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>Do you hear God's secret council,<sup>e</sup>  
And is wisdom revealed to you only?  
<sup>9</sup>What know you, that we know not?  
What insight have you that we lack?  
<sup>10</sup>With us are the gray and the aged,  
Men older by far than your father.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Do you spurn the divine consolations,  
The words spoken gently to you?<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>Why do your feelings control you,  
And why do your eyes roll in frenzy,<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>13</sup>That you set your will against God,  
And let such words escape you?

<sup>14</sup>What is man, that he should be clean,  
Or one born of woman, innocent?  
<sup>15</sup>If God trusts not even his holy ones,  
And the heavens are unclean in his sight,  
<sup>16</sup>How much more abhorrent and filthy  
A man who drinks evil like water!<sup>i</sup>

The tes-  
timony of  
all ages is  
that  
calamity  
overtakes  
the  
wicked

<sup>17</sup>I will show you, listen to me;  
What I have seen I will tell,—  
<sup>18</sup>What wise men have made known  
And not hidden, told by<sup>j</sup> their fathers,  
<sup>19</sup>To whom alone the land was given,  
When no stranger had come among them.  
<sup>20</sup>The wicked man writhes with pain all his days,  
All the years laid up for the tyrant.  
<sup>21</sup>In his ears is the sound of terrors,  
In prosperity comes the spoiler,  
<sup>22</sup>He cannot escape<sup>k</sup> from the darkness,  
He is destined for the edge of the sword,<sup>l</sup>  
<sup>23</sup>Set aside as food for the vulture,<sup>m</sup>

<sup>d</sup> 15<sup>7</sup> Cf. Pr. 8<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> 15<sup>8</sup> Or *Do you hearken in the council of God?*

<sup>f</sup> 15<sup>10</sup> Here the old man speaks; cf. 12<sup>13</sup> and contrast Wisd. Sol. 4<sup>3-4</sup>:

*For honorable old age is not that which standeth in length of time,  
Nor is its measure given by number of years:  
But understanding is gray hairs unto men,  
And an unspotted life is ripe old age.*

<sup>g</sup> 15<sup>11</sup> *I. e.*, Eliphaz's earlier words.

<sup>h</sup> 15<sup>12</sup> The Heb. word occurs nowhere else. Perhaps with some commentators, following the Gk. and one Heb. MS., we should read, *his eyes are lifted up*; *i. e.*, he is proud.

<sup>i</sup> 15<sup>16</sup> *I. e.*, is morally degenerate.

<sup>j</sup> 15<sup>18</sup> Lit., *from* (*i. e.*, having received it from).

<sup>k</sup> 15<sup>22</sup> Lit., *will not depart*, revising the Heb. with Duhm, who urges strongly that the repetition of this line in ■ represents the original.

<sup>l</sup> 15<sup>23</sup> So Gk. Heb. omits *edge*.

<sup>m</sup> 15<sup>23</sup> So Gk., supported by the context and a slight revision of the evidently corrupt Heb.

## ELIPHAZ

- He knows he is doomed to disaster.<sup>n</sup>  
 The day of darkness<sup>o</sup> <sup>24</sup>terrifies him;  
 Distress and anguish o'erwhelm him,  
 As a king prepared for the fray.<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>25</sup>For his hand he has raised against God,  
 And has even defied<sup>q</sup> the Almighty.  
<sup>26</sup>He runs against him insolently<sup>r</sup>  
 With the thick bosses of his bucklers,  
<sup>27</sup>For he has covered his face with his fat,  
 And put folds of fat on his loins;<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>But he shall dwell<sup>u</sup> in desolate cities,  
 In houses uninhabited,  
 About to fall into ruin.<sup>v</sup>  
<sup>29</sup>He shall not be rich; his wealth shall not endure;  
 On the earth he shall cast no shadow.<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>30</sup>The flame<sup>x</sup> shall wither his branches,  
 And by the wind his fruit shall fall.<sup>y</sup>  
<sup>31</sup>Let him not, self-deceived, trust in vanity,  
 For vanity shall be his recompense.  
<sup>32</sup>His pruning<sup>z</sup> shall be accomplished before its time,  
 And his branch shall not become green.  
<sup>33</sup>He shall shed, like the vine, his unripe fruit,  
 And cast, like the olive-tree, his blossom;  
<sup>34</sup>For the company of the godless is barren;  
 Fire consumes the tents of bribery.  
<sup>35</sup>They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity,  
 And their womb matures deceit.

### § 9. Job: Even Though Unjustly Afflicted, Man Has a Friend in Heaven, Job 16-17

- Job 16**    <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:  
               <sup>2</sup>Many such things have I heard;  
               You are all wearisome comforters.<sup>a</sup>  
               <sup>3</sup>Is there no end to vain words?<sup>b</sup>

Job's  
friends  
sorry  
com-  
forters

---

<sup>n</sup> 15<sup>23</sup> So Gk.  
<sup>o</sup> 15<sup>23</sup> Connecting the phrase, as does the Gk., with the following verb.  
<sup>p</sup> 15<sup>24</sup> The meaning of the word must be inferred from the context. Possibly this line should come at the end of <sup>23</sup>.  
<sup>q</sup> 15<sup>25</sup> Lit., *acted like a hero* (cp. Goliath).  
<sup>r</sup> 15<sup>25</sup> The reference is still to the godless man, i. e., Job.  
<sup>s</sup> 15<sup>26</sup> Heb., *with his neck*. The above reading is confirmed by the Gk.  
<sup>t</sup> 15<sup>27</sup> I. e., has become gross and insensate to all religious feeling.  
<sup>u</sup> 15<sup>28</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. as the context demands.  
<sup>v</sup> 15<sup>28</sup> I. e., he defies God by building up towns which shall be destroyed by God because of their guilt; cf. Dt. 13<sup>12-18</sup>.  
<sup>w</sup> 15<sup>29</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. The Heb. is obscure and probably corrupt.  
<sup>x</sup> 15<sup>30</sup> Heb. inserts before this line, *He shall not depart from darkness*, probably a gloss from <sup>23</sup>.  
<sup>y</sup> 15<sup>30</sup> So Gk. Heb. is corrupt.  
<sup>z</sup> 15<sup>32</sup> So Gk., Old Lat., and Sah. Heb. is corrupt.  
<sup>aa</sup> § 9 The tone of this speech is very bitter, but more and more, as his friends fail him, Job turns in desperation to the very God who has, as he feels, so unjustly afflicted him.  
<sup>ab</sup> <sup>a</sup> 16<sup>2</sup> Lit., *Comforters of trouble*; i. e., they only add to his trouble.  
<sup>ac</sup> <sup>b</sup> 16<sup>3</sup> Lit., *words of wind*; i. e., words that lack sense and do not fit Job's case.

## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

What provokes you that you answer?

<sup>4</sup>I too could speak like you;

If you were but in my place,

I could join words together against you,

And at you could shake my head.

<sup>5</sup>I could<sup>c</sup> strengthen you with my speech,<sup>d</sup>

And the solace of my lips could comfort you.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>6</sup>If I speak, my grief is not assuaged;

If I cease, what relief does it give me?<sup>f</sup>

<sup>7</sup>But now he has wearied and dazed me.<sup>g</sup>

All my misfortune <sup>8</sup>lays hold of me;<sup>h</sup>

As a witness it rises against me;

My leanness testifies to my face.

<sup>9</sup>His anger has torn and assailed me,

He has gnashed on me with his teeth.

My foes<sup>i</sup> whet their eyes<sup>j</sup> upon me;<sup>k</sup>

<sup>10</sup>They open their mouths<sup>l</sup> against me;

They smite my cheek reproachfully;

They all take sides against me.

<sup>11</sup>God has given me up to knaves,<sup>m</sup>

Cast me into the hands of the wicked.

<sup>12</sup>I was at ease, but he shattered me,

By the neck he seized and crushed me;

He has set me up as his target,

<sup>13</sup>From all sides his arrows assail me.<sup>n</sup>

He cleaves my reins and spares not;

He pours out my gall on the ground.

<sup>14</sup>One breach after another he makes on me;

He rushes at me like a warrior.

<sup>15</sup>I sewed sackcloth upon my skin,<sup>o</sup>

And have humbled myself in the dust.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>16</sup>My face is red with weeping,

Job forsaken, the  
object of  
human  
and  
divine  
attack,  
yet  
innocent

Also the  
victim of  
God's de-  
structive  
might

<sup>o</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> E.V.V., wrongly, *But I would*. There is no conjunction or change of construction in the Heb.

<sup>d</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> Lit., *mouth*; *i. e.*, mere talk.

<sup>e</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> In the Heb. a scribe has by mistake introduced the verb *assuage* from the next line. In the Gk. and Syr. a different form of the verb is used and the negative is added. The parallelism indicates that the original had some such verb as *support*, *encourage*, or *comfort*.

<sup>f</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> Lit., *What (sc. burden) goes from me?*

<sup>g</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> Restoring the Heb. by the aid of the Gk.

<sup>h</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> Following Duhm in restoring the corrupt Heb. by the aid of 42<sup>u</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> So Syr., Sym., and Ar. Heb., *my adversary*.

<sup>j</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> With this idiom cp. the Eng., *look daggers at me*.

<sup>k</sup> 16<sup>s</sup> So Syr. and the demands of the context.

<sup>l</sup> 16<sup>10</sup> So Syr., Targ., Lat., and nine Heb. MSS. Heb., *with their mouths*.

<sup>m</sup> 16<sup>11</sup> Following the VSS. in correcting the Heb. The reference is probably to Job's former friends.

<sup>n</sup> 16<sup>13</sup> God is here pictured as the divine huntsman, and man is his prey.

<sup>p</sup> 16<sup>15</sup> Not merely put it on as in ordinary affliction, but assumed it as a permanent garb.

<sup>o</sup> 16<sup>15</sup> Heb., *laid my horn in the dust*. The opposite idiom, *exalt one's horn*, means be proud.

# JOB

Deep darkness is over my eyelids;  
<sup>17</sup>Although I have done no violence,  
 And though my prayer is pure.  
<sup>18</sup>O earth, cover not my blood,<sup>a</sup>  
 Let my cry find no place to rest.  
<sup>19</sup>Even now is my Witness in heaven,  
 He who vouches for me is on high.  
<sup>20</sup>My friends pour their scorn upon me,  
 But my eye pours out tears to God,<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>21</sup>That he plead for a man with God  
 As a mortal pleads with his neighbor!<sup>s</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>For when but a few years come,  
 I shall go whence I shall not return.  
<sup>17</sup> <sup>1</sup>His anger<sup>t</sup> has ruined my life;<sup>u</sup>  
 The grave is left<sup>v</sup> for me.  
<sup>2</sup>Surely mockers<sup>w</sup> are with me,  
 And my eye dwells<sup>x</sup> on their defiance.

<sup>3</sup>Place now my pledge<sup>y</sup> beside thee;  
 Who is there that will strike hands with me?<sup>z</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>Thou hast<sup>a</sup> made me a byword of the people,  
 And when they see me they spit.<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>My eye also is dim through sorrow,  
 And my limbs are all like a shadow.  
<sup>8</sup>Upright men are astonished at this,<sup>c</sup>  
 And the guiltless bestirs him against the godless.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>The righteous man holds on his way,  
 And the man with clean hands grows stronger and stronger.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>But as for you all, come on now again!—  
 I shall not find a wise man among you.

Spurned  
by man,  
yet cer-  
tain of  
his in-  
nocence

<sup>a</sup> 16<sup>18</sup> The blood represented the life, and the blood of one unjustly slain was supposed to cry for vengeance; cf. Gen. 4<sup>10</sup>, Ezek. 24<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> 16<sup>20</sup> Cf. 13<sup>1-3</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> 16<sup>21</sup> So Targ. and Lat.; certain Heb. MSS., *And between a man and his neighbor*; standard Heb. text, *And a son of man with his neighbor*.

<sup>t</sup> 17<sup>1</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb., which reads, *my spirit* (or *anger*).

<sup>u</sup> 17<sup>1</sup> Lit., *days*.

<sup>v</sup> 17<sup>1</sup> Again correcting the Heb. in the light of the context.

<sup>w</sup> 17<sup>2</sup> Lit., *mockeries*.

<sup>x</sup> 17<sup>2</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb. This line is probably corrupt. The Gk. is quite different.

<sup>y</sup> 17<sup>3</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb. as suggested by the Syr.

<sup>z</sup> 17<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, be surety for me. Here follow vss. 4-5, which read:

<sup>4</sup>*For thou hast hid their heart from understanding,  
 Therefore shalt thou not exalt them.*

<sup>5</sup>*He who denounces his friends for a prey,  
 Even the eyes of his children shall fail.*

These two vss. appear to be scribal additions, for (1) they break the close connection between <sup>s</sup> and <sup>e</sup>; (2) Job has for the moment turned from his friends (in <sup>10</sup> he addresses them directly); (3) these vss. are loosely connected with each other and are proverbs that would naturally be added by a thoughtful scribe; (4) there is no antecedent.

<sup>a</sup> 17<sup>4</sup> So Gk. Heb. has the third person under the influence of 4-5.

<sup>b</sup> 17<sup>4</sup> Lit., *And I am an object of spitting in (their) presence*.

<sup>c</sup> 17<sup>5</sup> This probably refers to Job's fate.

<sup>d</sup> 17<sup>5</sup> The godless are probably Job's friends.

<sup>e</sup> 17<sup>5-6</sup> These vss. may be a dislocated section of Bildad's speech. If so, they fit best after 18<sup>4</sup>.

## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

No hope  
in the  
future

- <sup>11</sup>My days are passed in roaring;<sup>f</sup>  
My dearest possessions<sup>g</sup> are torn away.  
<sup>12</sup>They<sup>h</sup> turn the night into day;  
'Light,' they say,<sup>i</sup> 'is close to darkness.'  
<sup>13</sup>If I look to Sheol as my house,  
Have made my bed in the dark,  
<sup>14</sup>Have called the pit my father,  
The worm my mother and sister,  
<sup>15</sup>Where then is my hope,  
And who can discern my advantage?<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>Will they go with me<sup>k</sup> down to Sheol,  
Or to dust shall we go down<sup>k</sup> together?

### § 10. Bildad: Disaster Always Overtakes the Wicked, Job 18

#### Job 18

Job's  
fury  
rebuked

- <sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:  
<sup>2</sup>When will you end<sup>l</sup> mere words?  
Consider, and then we will speak.  
<sup>3</sup>Why are we counted as beasts,  
And deemed unclean by you?  
<sup>4</sup>You who tear yourself in your anger,  
Shall the earth be forsaken for you,  
Or the rock be removed from its place?

Fate  
of the  
wicked

- <sup>5</sup>The light of the wicked is quenched,  
And the flame of his fire shines not.  
<sup>6</sup>The light is dark in his tent,  
And the lamp above him goes out,  
<sup>7</sup>His confident strides are shortened,  
And his own counsel proves his ruin,  
<sup>8</sup>For his foot is thrust<sup>m</sup> into a net,  
And he walks straight into the toils,  
<sup>9</sup>A trap shall catch his heel,  
And a snare shall tightly grip him.  
<sup>10</sup>A noose is hid for him in the ground,  
And a gin<sup>n</sup> is set in his way.  
<sup>11</sup>Terrors on all sides affright him  
And chase after him<sup>o</sup> at his heels.

<sup>f</sup> 17<sup>11</sup> So Gk. Heb., *my purposes* (apparently in apposition with *possessions*, subject of *are torn away*).

<sup>g</sup> 17<sup>11</sup> Lit., *the possessions of my heart*. Some take this to mean *desires*.

<sup>h</sup> 17<sup>12</sup> I. e., presumably, Job's friends, but they are very abruptly introduced. The verse is corrupt and may also be misplaced.

<sup>i</sup> 17<sup>12</sup> Supplying *they say*, as the context seems to require. The text here is hopelessly corrupt.

<sup>j</sup> 17<sup>15</sup> Lit., *good*, emending the Heb. as indicated by the Gk.

<sup>k</sup> 17<sup>16</sup> Revising the Heb. according to the Gk.

§ 10 After an unsympathetic rebuke of Job's self-importance, Bildad elaborates poetically his former theme: a sinner's prosperity is insecure and brief. This time, however, he does not urge repentance and promise restoration. His tone throughout is one of condemnation.

<sup>l</sup> 18<sup>2</sup> Revising the Heb. according to the Gk.

<sup>m</sup> 18<sup>8</sup> So Gk., Syr., Lat., and nine Heb. MSS. Heb., *with his foot he is thrust*.

<sup>n</sup> 18<sup>10</sup> The piling up of synonyms in this passage is remarkable.

<sup>o</sup> 18<sup>11</sup> Lit., *scatter him*.



## BILDAD

- <sup>12</sup>Disaster shall hunger for him,<sup>p</sup>  
 And misfortune await his stumbling,  
<sup>13</sup>His skin be consumed by sickness,<sup>q</sup>  
 Death's first-born<sup>r</sup> consume his members.  
<sup>14</sup>Rooted out of his tent, his trusted refuge,<sup>s</sup>  
 He shall be brought to the king of terrors.<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>Lilith<sup>u</sup> shall dwell in his tent,  
 Brimstone be strewed o'er his dwelling.  
<sup>16</sup>His roots underneath shall dry up,  
 And his branch above shall wither.  
<sup>17</sup>His memory shall fade from the land,  
 No fame shall he have abroad.  
<sup>18</sup>Driven from light into darkness,  
 From the world shall he be banished.  
<sup>19</sup>He shall have neither son nor scion among his people,  
 Nor any survivor where he sojourned.  
<sup>20</sup>They who come after shall be astonished at his day,<sup>v</sup>  
 As those who went before were affrighted.<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>21</sup>Surely such are the homes of the unrighteous,  
 Such the place of one who does not know God.

### § 11. Job: The Vision of God and of a Vindication After Death, Job 19

#### Job 19

- <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:  
<sup>2</sup>How long will you force me to suffer,  
 And break me in pieces with words?  
<sup>3</sup>These many<sup>x</sup> times you reproach me,  
 Yet are not ashamed to attack<sup>y</sup> me.  
<sup>4</sup>If it even were true that I erred,  
 My error is mine alone.<sup>z</sup>

Bildad's  
words  
do not  
apply to  
Job's  
case

<sup>p</sup> 18<sup>22</sup> Slightly revising the Heb.

<sup>q</sup> 18<sup>23</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. according to the Eastern consonantal text. The allusion is probably to Job's horrible malady.

<sup>r</sup> 18<sup>24</sup> *I. e.*, fatal disease.

<sup>s</sup> 18<sup>24</sup> *Lit.*, *his tent, his confidence*. Gk., *healing shall be rooted out of his tent*.

<sup>t</sup> 18<sup>24</sup> *I. e.*, Death.

<sup>u</sup> 18<sup>25</sup> Revising the Heb., which reads, *what is not his*. Gk., *in his night*. Lilith was the vampire-like night-monster.

<sup>v</sup> 18<sup>20</sup> *I. e.*, judgment day, the calamity that overtakes him. Gk., Sah., and Eth. read, *at him*. This may be original.

<sup>w</sup> 18<sup>20</sup> *Lit.*, *laid hold on terror*.

§ 11 Job gives up his friends as hopeless. Equally hopeless seems the God of popular tradition. Job fares forth a lone pilgrim and exile, forsaken and taunted by kinsmen, friends, and apparently God. And yet he is not crushed by his woes. Conscious of his innocence, he faces yawning Sheol, and then a miracle takes place. The mists of popular belief that had hitherto concealed the nobler realities of the other world roll away, and he sees God vindicated because he will yet vindicate his servant. In this passage the author reaches one of his goals. In this dramatic way he sets forth his deep conviction that if God's justice is not vindicated in the present life of a man, it will be in the life that lies beyond the grave. Also he maintains, in words which will continue through the ages to comfort those who mourn beside the bier of their dead, that a sentient life is still assured to those who pass through the valley of the shadow of death. This brilliant ray of hope was quickly cut off by the clouds of current belief, but when once it had flashed into the eye of man he could not wholly forget it, however deep the encircling gloom.

<sup>x</sup> 19<sup>3</sup> *Lit.*, *ten*.

<sup>y</sup> 19<sup>4</sup> So Gk., Sah., and O.Lat. The exact meaning of the Heb. word is not known.

<sup>z</sup> 19<sup>4</sup> *Lit.*, *lodges with me*. The idea probably is: I alone bear the consequences of my mistake; it does not concern nor hurt you (cf. 7<sup>20</sup>).

## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Job  
abandoned  
and  
assailed  
by God

- <sup>5</sup>If indeed you would rise up against me,  
And charge me with shameful crimes,  
<sup>6</sup>Then know that God has betrayed me,  
And has spread his net about me.  
<sup>7</sup>I cry, 'Wrong!' but I am not heard;<sup>a</sup>  
I call, but there is no justice.  
<sup>8</sup>He has blocked my way completely,<sup>b</sup>  
Has shrouded my path in darkness:<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>He has stripped me of my glory,  
And taken the crown from my head.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>He has demolished me completely,<sup>e</sup> and I am gone;  
And my hope he has uprooted like a tree.  
<sup>11</sup>He kindles his wrath against me,  
And regards me as one of his enemies.  
<sup>12</sup>His troops come on together  
And throw up a rampart<sup>f</sup> against me  
And encamp about my tent.  
<sup>13</sup>My brothers keep far from me,<sup>g</sup>  
My friends are wholly estranged.  
<sup>14</sup>My neighbors have ceased to know me,<sup>h</sup>  
The guests in my house have forgotten me.<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>My own maids count me a stranger,  
In their sight I am but an alien.  
<sup>16</sup>To my servant I call, with no answer;  
With my mouth I must entreat him.  
<sup>17</sup>My breath is offensive<sup>j</sup> to my wife,  
And I am loathsome to my mother's children.<sup>k</sup>  
<sup>18</sup>Even young children despise me;  
Whenever I rise, they jeer at me.  
<sup>19</sup>All my intimate friends<sup>l</sup> abhor me,  
And they whom I love turn against me.  
<sup>20</sup>My skin clings to my bones,<sup>m</sup>  
I escape by the skin of my teeth.<sup>n</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 19<sup>7</sup> Cf. Jer. 20<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> 19<sup>8</sup> Lit., *fenced my path so that I cannot pass*.

<sup>c</sup> 19<sup>8</sup> Lit., *set darkness in my paths*.

<sup>d</sup> 19<sup>9</sup> I. e., his reputation.

<sup>e</sup> 19<sup>10</sup> Lit., *broken me down on all sides*.

<sup>f</sup> 19<sup>12</sup> Lit., *their way*.

<sup>g</sup> 19<sup>13</sup> So Gk., Aquila, Syr., Sym., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *he has put from me*.

<sup>h</sup> 19<sup>14</sup> With Duhm slightly revising the text as the context requires.

<sup>i</sup> 19<sup>14</sup> Joining the first two words of <sup>15</sup> with the last verb in <sup>14</sup>.

<sup>j</sup> 19<sup>17</sup> Lit., *strange*; i. e., *baful because of his loathsome leprosy*. The Heb. verb may be from a root which in Ar. means, *smell bad*. The parallelism supports this meaning.

<sup>k</sup> 19<sup>17</sup> Lit., *the sons of my (mother's) womb*.

<sup>l</sup> 19<sup>19</sup> Lit., *the men of my intimate circle*.

<sup>m</sup> 19<sup>20</sup> This line is overfull and makes little sense as it reads in the trad. Heb. text. Gk. and Sah. have: *My flesh rots in my skin*. If not original, this indicates that *my flesh* is probably the addition of a scribe.

<sup>n</sup> 19<sup>20</sup> The exact meaning of the proverbial phrase is not clear. Possibly in this context it is equivalent to nothing at all, for the teeth have no skin. So Barton, Job 17<sup>4</sup>. Bickell and Duhm would revise it so as to read, *my teeth are gone*.

## JOB

- <sup>21</sup>Have pity, have pity, my friends,  
For the hand of God has touched me.  
<sup>22</sup>Why, like God, do you persecute me,  
Not content with destroying my body?  
<sup>23</sup>Oh, that my words were now written,  
That they were inscribed in a book,  
<sup>24</sup>That with an iron pen and with lead<sup>o</sup>  
In rock they were graven forever!  
<sup>25</sup>For I know that my Defender<sup>p</sup> lives,  
That at last he shall stand upon earth;<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>And after this skin is destroyed,  
Freed from my flesh,<sup>r</sup> I shall see him,<sup>s</sup>  
<sup>27</sup>Whom I shall behold for myself;  
My own eyes shall see, and no stranger's.  
My heart in my breast stands still!<sup>t</sup>
- <sup>28</sup>If you say, 'How can we persecute him  
And find the root of the matter in him?'<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>29</sup>Then dread the sword for yourselves,  
For wrath shall come on the wicked,<sup>v</sup>  
That you may know there is a judgment.

Pity  
needed,  
not per-  
secution

Firm  
hope that  
even  
after  
death he  
will be  
vindi-  
cated  
by God

Judgment  
shall  
come  
upon his  
friends

### § 12. Zophar: The Triumph of the Wicked Is Brief, Job 20

- Job 20**    <sup>1</sup>Then Zophar the Naamathite answered:  
<sup>2</sup>Not so<sup>w</sup> do my thoughts make answer;  
For this reason I hasten to speak.<sup>x</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>Must I hear your insulting reproof?  
With senseless bluster<sup>y</sup> you answer me.

In time  
guilt shall  
surely be  
punished

<sup>o</sup> 19<sup>24</sup> Probably the meaning is *with an iron pen in lead* (and) *in rock*, or *graven in rock with an iron pen and* (filled in) *with lead*. The Heb. proposition *in* also means *with*.

<sup>p</sup> 19<sup>25</sup> Heb., *Goel*, the avenger of blood (e. g., Dt. 19<sup>6, 12</sup>) and the one who espoused the cause of the accused. In Ruth 3 the same word (E.V.V., *kinsman*) is applied to Boaz.

<sup>q</sup> 19<sup>24</sup> Lit., *on the dust*; i. e., on my grave.

<sup>r</sup> 19<sup>26</sup> Lit., *From my flesh*; i. e., without it.

<sup>s</sup> 19<sup>26</sup> Cf. the translation of Enoch and the story of Noah in its old Bab. forms: certain favored ones were allowed to enter the presence of the gods and to live immortally.

<sup>t</sup> 19<sup>27</sup> At the thought of restoration to Jehovah's favor, Job is on the point of fainting.

<sup>u</sup> 19<sup>28</sup> So 100 Heb. MSS., Theod., Targ., and Lat. Heb., *in me*. The idea is, *How can we prove his guilt?*

<sup>v</sup> 19<sup>29</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth., and a revised Heb. text.

§ 12 Zophar, like the Spanish inquisitors, is enraged by the thought that the object of his attack is inspired by a God-given vision of truth, as well as by Job's bold counter-attack, 19<sup>29</sup>. Zophar's intemperate words betray his rage. As has been said, his is the utterance of a partisan, who, mistaking the passionate resentment of wounded vanity for the inspiration of true religion, zealously magnifies God's strictness. Like many a theologian, he pictures God as a superman with all the unlovable qualities that the dogmatist himself possesses.

<sup>w</sup> 20<sup>2</sup> So Gk. Heb., *therefore*, but this makes no sense in this context.

<sup>x</sup> 20<sup>3</sup> Lit., *On account of my haste in me*. Possibly the line should be revised to read, *For this reason my heart is stirred*.

<sup>y</sup> 20<sup>3</sup> Lit., *wind out of* (without) *understanding*. So Gk. and a slightly revised Heb. In 8<sup>2</sup> and 15<sup>2</sup> Job's friends call his words but wind. The above reading (demanded by the sense) requires a further minor emendation of the Heb., which reads, *the spirit* (wind) *of my understanding answers me*.

## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

- <sup>4</sup>Know you not<sup>a</sup> this from of old,  
 Since man was placed on the earth:  
<sup>5</sup>That the joy of the wicked is short,  
 The mirth of the godless but momentary?  
<sup>6</sup>Though his height be as high as the heavens  
 And his head reach up to the clouds,  
<sup>7</sup>Like his dung he shall perish forever;  
 Those who saw him shall say, 'Where is he?'  
<sup>8</sup>Like a dream<sup>a</sup> he shall take wings and vanish;<sup>b</sup>  
 He shall flee<sup>c</sup> like a vision of night.  
<sup>9</sup>The eye which beheld him shall see him no more,  
 And never again shall his place behold him.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>His children<sup>e</sup> shall seek favor of the poor;  
 His descendants<sup>f</sup> shall give back his wealth.  
<sup>11</sup>His bones, now full of youth,<sup>g</sup>  
 With him shall lie in the dust.  
<sup>12</sup>Though evil is sweet in his mouth,  
 As he keeps it hid 'neath his tongue,  
<sup>13</sup>Though he spares it and will not let go of it,  
 But keeps it still in his mouth,  
<sup>14</sup>Yet the food in his stomach is turned;  
 'Tis the poison of asps within him.  
<sup>15</sup>The wealth he has swallowed he must vomit:  
 God will cast it out of him.  
<sup>16</sup>He has sucked the poison of asps;  
 The tongue of the viper shall slay him.  
<sup>17</sup>No rivers of oil<sup>h</sup> shall he see,  
 No streams of honey and butter.  
<sup>18</sup>He must restore and not swallow his gains;  
 In<sup>i</sup> the wealth from his trading no joy has he.  
<sup>19</sup>Having crushed and forsaken the poor  
 And robbed a house not of his building,<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>No security shall he have with his possessions,<sup>k</sup>  
 Nor safety with that which delights him.  
<sup>21</sup>Naught is left that he has not devoured;  
 Therefore his prosperity is not lasting.  
<sup>22</sup>In the fulness of plenty he shall be in straits;

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<sup>a</sup> 20<sup>4</sup> So Gk., one Heb. MS., and demands of context. Heb. omits *not*.

<sup>a</sup> 20<sup>8</sup> Cf. for the same figure Ps. 73<sup>20</sup>, Is. 29<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> 20<sup>8</sup> Lit., *not be found*.

<sup>c</sup> 20<sup>8</sup> So the VSS. Heb., *be chased away*.

<sup>d</sup> 20<sup>9</sup> These two lines are virtually a repetition of 7<sup>8, 10</sup>, but they fit the parallelism and there is no sufficient reason for regarding them as secondary.

<sup>e</sup> 20<sup>10</sup> Heb., *hands*, but this reading is inconsistent with 9-10.

<sup>f</sup> 20<sup>10</sup> This reading is obtained by adding one consonant, as suggested by Budde. Possibly these lines are but marginal notes on 18-19.

<sup>g</sup> 20<sup>11</sup> Youth represents full vigor.

<sup>h</sup> 20<sup>17</sup> Revising the Heb. Gk., *milking of flocks*.

<sup>i</sup> 20<sup>18</sup> So about fifty MSS. and Syr. Heb., *according to*.

<sup>j</sup> 20<sup>19</sup> Correcting the Heb. according to the Lat.

<sup>k</sup> 20<sup>20</sup> Following the Gk. Heb., *for he knows no quietness within him*.

## ZOPHAR

- Every distress<sup>1</sup> shall assail him.  
<sup>23</sup>When he is about to fill his belly,  
 God<sup>m</sup> will let loose his hot wrath against him,  
 And rain down terrors<sup>n</sup> upon him.<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>24</sup>As he flees from the weapon of iron,  
 The bronze bow pierces him;  
<sup>25</sup>The missile comes out of his body,<sup>p</sup>  
 And the glittering point from his gall.<sup>q</sup>  
 Terrors keep coming upon him;  
<sup>26</sup>Utter darkness is stored up for him.<sup>r</sup>  
 A fire not blown by man shall devour him  
 And consume what is left in his tent.  
<sup>27</sup>The heavens shall bring to light his guilt,  
 And the earth shall rise in protest against him.  
<sup>28</sup>Destruction shall sweep away his house<sup>s</sup>  
 Like driftwood<sup>t</sup> in the day of his wrath.  
<sup>29</sup>Such is the wicked man's portion from God,  
 The divine retribution for all his iniquity.

### § 13. Job: The Grim Facts of Life Belie the Traditional Explanation of Suffering, Job 21

#### Job 21

- <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:  
<sup>2</sup>Listen attentively to my speech,  
 And let this be your consolation:  
<sup>3</sup>Bear with me now while I speak,  
 And when I have spoken, mock on.<sup>u</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>Is it of man I complain?<sup>v</sup>  
 And why should I not be impatient?

Let the  
 friends  
 be silent  
 in the  
 presence  
 of the  
 terrible  
 facts

- <sup>5</sup>Look at me and be filled with amazement,  
 And lay your hand on your mouth.<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>When I remember I am dismayed  
 And shuddering seizes my flesh.

<sup>1</sup> 20<sup>22</sup> So Gk. and Lat. Heb., *hand of one in trouble*.  
<sup>m</sup> 20<sup>22</sup> The subject is not expressed in the Heb.  
<sup>n</sup> 20<sup>22</sup> Heb., *with his food* (object not expressed). The above reading involves only a slight emendation and is supported by the Gk.  
<sup>o</sup> 20<sup>22</sup> This doubtful vs. may be a scribal addition.  
<sup>p</sup> 20<sup>25</sup> Following the Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth. in revising the Heb., which reads, *he draws it forth and it comes out of his body*.  
<sup>q</sup> 20<sup>25</sup> Cf. 16<sup>12-13</sup>.  
<sup>r</sup> 20<sup>26</sup> So Gk., Old Lat., and Sah. Heb., *for his treasures*.  
<sup>s</sup> 20<sup>28</sup> So Gk. Heb., *The increase of his house shall depart*.  
<sup>t</sup> 20<sup>28</sup> The Heb. word is uncertain, but seems to mean *things swept away*.  
<sup>u</sup> § 13 In this section Job weighs carefully the evidence that gives the lie to the sweeping assertions of his friends. He dwells at length upon the moral disorder of the world. The vital question at issue is not Job's but God's justice. Here we find a philosopher's scientific analysis of the phenomena of life. The old dogma of proportionate rewards is torn to tatters. The Gk. omits <sup>23-25</sup>, and <sup>24</sup> is closely connected with <sup>27</sup>, so that the intermediate vs. are not essential to the context. On the other hand, they fit logically in Job's speech and probably were omitted by the Gk. translators because they considered them, as they are in fact, a repetition of the thought of <sup>10-20</sup>.  
<sup>v</sup> 21<sup>4</sup> Gk. inserts *not*, but the above is more consistent with the action of the friends.  
<sup>w</sup> 21<sup>4</sup> *I. e.*, not against man but God.  
<sup>x</sup> 21<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, in surprise and wonderment.



## SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

The prosperity  
of the  
wicked

- <sup>7</sup>Why do the wicked live on,  
Grow old, and attain great power?  
<sup>8</sup>Their children are settled about them,<sup>z</sup>  
And their offspring before their eyes.  
<sup>9</sup>Their households are safe<sup>y</sup> from fear,  
No rod of God<sup>z</sup> falls upon them.  
<sup>10</sup>Their<sup>a</sup> bulls gender and fail not;  
Their cows never lose their calves.  
<sup>11</sup>They send out their young like a flock,  
And their children dance for joy;  
<sup>12</sup>They sing<sup>b</sup> to the timbrel<sup>c</sup> and harp,  
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.  
<sup>13</sup>They complete<sup>d</sup> their days in prosperity,  
And in a moment<sup>e</sup> go down to Sheol.  
<sup>14</sup>Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us;  
We have no desire to know thy ways.  
<sup>15</sup>Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?  
What advantage have we, if we pray to him?'  
<sup>16</sup>Behold! Their fortune is in their own hands.  
Little does God heed the counsel of sinners.<sup>f</sup>

They  
even  
defy  
God

Just  
punish-  
ment  
except-  
tional

- <sup>17</sup>How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out?  
How oft does calamity fall upon them?  
<sup>18</sup>How often are they as straw before the wind  
And as chaff that the storm carries off?  
<sup>19</sup>God stores up guilt for his children;—  
Let him punish the man himself, that he may know it!<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Let his own eyes see his destruction,  
Let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty!  
<sup>21</sup>What cares he for his house after him,  
When the number of his months is cut short?  
<sup>22</sup>Shall any teach knowledge to God,  
Who judges those on high?  
<sup>23</sup>One dies with his strength unimpaired,  
Wholly at ease and prosperous;  
<sup>24</sup>His pails are full of milk,  
In his bones the marrow is moist.

All men  
alike

<sup>z</sup> 21<sup>8</sup> So Gk. and Syr. Heb. adds *with them*, but this phrase destroys the metre and adds nothing to the sense.

<sup>y</sup> 21<sup>9</sup> So Gk., Lat., and corrected Heb.

<sup>a</sup> 21<sup>10</sup> *I. e.*, divine judgment.

<sup>b</sup> 21<sup>11</sup> So Gk. and Lat. Heb., *his*.

<sup>c</sup> 21<sup>12</sup> *Lit., lift up* (sc. the voice).

<sup>d</sup> 21<sup>13</sup> So VSS. and many MSS. The standard text reads, *according to the timbrel*.

<sup>e</sup> 21<sup>14</sup> So variant readings and VSS. Trad. Heb., *wear out*.

<sup>f</sup> 21<sup>15</sup> To die quickly in old age is rightly regarded as a blessing.

<sup>g</sup> 21<sup>16</sup> So Gk. The meaning seems to be that God apparently cares nothing about the plans of the wicked; cf. Mal. 3<sup>13-15</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> 21<sup>17</sup> *I. e.*, if God were just he would make every sinner pay the penalty of his own sins and not let the consequences fall on the children of the wrong-doer. The current translation, which supplies *you say*, is not impossible, but when the author a little later (<sup>23</sup>) wishes to express this idea, he supplies the introductory words.

## JOB

<sup>25</sup>But another dies embittered,  
With never a taste of prosperity.  
<sup>26</sup>In the dust they lie down together,  
And the worm covers them both.

<sup>27</sup>Indeed, I know your thoughts,  
And the devices by which you would wrong me.  
<sup>28</sup>For you say, 'Where is the house of the tyrant,  
And where are the dwellings<sup>b</sup> of the wicked?'

Facts  
disprove  
your  
claims

<sup>29</sup>Have you not asked those who travel?  
And do you not know their proofs,  
<sup>30</sup>That the wicked is kept from disaster,  
Is saved<sup>i</sup> in the day of wrath?

<sup>31</sup>Who declares his acts to his face,  
Or repays him for what he has done?

<sup>32</sup>And yet he is borne to the grave,  
And watch is kept over his tomb,

<sup>33</sup>Sweet to him are the clods of the valley;<sup>j</sup>  
After him all men follow,<sup>k</sup>  
As innumerable have before!<sup>l</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Why do you give me vain comfort,  
And make answers bereft of all truth?

### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

#### § 14. Eliphaz: Job's Guilt Fully Explains His Affliction, Job 22

#### Job 22

<sup>1</sup>Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

<sup>2</sup>Can a man be of service to God?

For a wise man serves only himself.

<sup>3</sup>Is the Almighty pleased by your righteousness?

Does your blameless life<sup>a</sup> bring him profit?

<sup>4</sup>For your piety<sup>b</sup> would he reprove you,

Or prefer a charge against you?

Sin the  
only ex-  
planation  
of Job's  
affliction

<sup>5</sup>Is not your wickedness great?

Is there no end to your crimes?

<sup>6</sup>For you take pledges wrongly from kinsmen,<sup>c</sup>

The  
probable  
sins

<sup>b</sup> 21<sup>28</sup> So one MS. and Lat. Heb. adds, *tent*.

<sup>i</sup> 21<sup>30</sup> Revising the Heb. as the context requires. Heb., *they are led away*.

<sup>j</sup> 21<sup>33</sup> Even after death he shall sleep peacefully amidst pleasing environment.

<sup>k</sup> 21<sup>33</sup> Lit., *draw after him*.

<sup>l</sup> 21<sup>33</sup> Possibly this line is secondary. It destroys the regular metre and may have been added by a scribe. The evidence, however, is not decisive. If it is original, the meaning is that the prosperous wicked man here pictured is no exception, but is only one of many.

§ 14 As Job grows calmer his friends become more intemperate. Here the author has faithfully presented the psychology of dogmatism. Eliphaz well illustrates the futility of *a priori* reasoning; Job is afflicted, therefore he must have sinned. His calamity is most crushing, therefore he must have committed the most heinous sins. On this slender basis even the mild Eliphaz goes on to recount a long list of hypothetical sins and then charges Job with committing them.

<sup>a</sup> 22<sup>3</sup> Lit., *that you make your ways perfect*.

<sup>b</sup> 22<sup>4</sup> Lit., *fear*. Again Eliphaz uses the term in the technical sense of religious faith; cf. 4<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> 22<sup>6</sup> *I. e.*, by taking advantage of the needs of the destitute.

### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

- And strip from the naked their clothing.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>You have given no drink to the weary,  
 And withheld your food from the hungry.  
<sup>8</sup>The land is held for him who is strong;<sup>e</sup>  
 The man specially favored<sup>f</sup> possesses it.  
<sup>9</sup>Widows you have sent away empty,  
 And broken<sup>g</sup> the arms of the fatherless.  
<sup>10</sup>Therefore snares encircle you,  
 And sudden fear confounds you;  
<sup>11</sup>Your light has gone out in darkness,<sup>h</sup>  
 And the flood of waters engulfs you.
- <sup>12</sup>Is not God in the height of heaven,<sup>i</sup>  
 And does he not see<sup>j</sup> how high the stars are?  
<sup>13</sup>Yet you say, 'What does God know about it,  
 Can he judge aright through the darkness?'  
<sup>14</sup>Clouds envelop him, he sees not,  
 And he walks on the vault of heaven.'  
<sup>15</sup>Will you keep to the way of old,  
 Which wicked men have trodden,  
<sup>16</sup>Who were snatched away before their time,  
 Whose foundation was poured out like a stream?<sup>k</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>The righteous see it and are glad,  
 And the innocent laugh them to scorn,  
<sup>18</sup>Saying, 'Surely our adversaries are destroyed,  
 And the fire has consumed what is left of them.'<sup>l</sup>
- <sup>21</sup>Be friendly with him and at peace,  
 For in this way good will come to you.  
<sup>22</sup>Receive now instruction from his mouth,  
 And lay up his words in your mind.  
<sup>23</sup>If you turn humbly<sup>m</sup> to the Almighty,  
 And banish sin far from your tent,  
<sup>24</sup>And lay your treasure in the dust,

Useless  
to try to  
escape  
God's  
judgment

Confes-  
sion and  
right  
deeds  
will alone  
bring  
relief

<sup>d</sup> 22<sup>8</sup> Taking the outer mantle and even the undergarments as security for loans; cf. Dt. 24<sup>10-12</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>8</sup> Lit., *man of arm*.

<sup>f</sup> 22<sup>8</sup> Lit., *he whose face is lifted up; i. e., who enjoys royal favor*. This vs. interrupts the close connection between <sup>7</sup> and <sup>9</sup> and may be secondary.

<sup>g</sup> 22<sup>9</sup> So the VSS. Heb., *are broken*.

<sup>h</sup> 22<sup>11</sup> So Gk. Heb., *Or darkness, you do not see*.

<sup>i</sup> 22<sup>12</sup> Syr., *Did not God make high the heavens?*

<sup>j</sup> 22<sup>12</sup> So Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth.

<sup>k</sup> 22<sup>16</sup> Vss. 17-18 are made up of extracts from 21<sup>14-16</sup> and interrupt the close logical connection between <sup>16</sup> and <sup>19</sup>. Reconstructed by the aid of the Gk. they read:

<sup>17</sup>Who said to God, 'Depart from us;'

And, 'What can the Almighty do for us?'

<sup>18</sup>Yet he filled their houses with good things.

But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

<sup>l</sup> 22<sup>18</sup> I. e., as the cities of the plain were destroyed, Gen. 18-19.

<sup>m</sup> 22<sup>23</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *you shall be built up*; but this is not in harmony with the context and is due to an obvious corruption of the Heb. text.

## ELIPHAZ

- The gold of Ophir among<sup>n</sup> the stones of the brooks,  
<sup>25</sup>Then the Almighty shall be your treasure,  
 And precious<sup>o</sup> silver shall he be to you.  
<sup>26</sup>You shall then find delight in the Lord,  
 And shall lift up your face to God.  
<sup>27</sup>You shall pray to him, and he will hear you;  
 And so you shall pay your vows.  
<sup>28</sup>What you decree shall stand,  
 And light shall shine on your ways;  
<sup>29</sup>For he humbles him who speaks proudly,<sup>p</sup>  
 But saves the man who is modest.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>30</sup>He delivers the man who is innocent;<sup>r</sup>  
 He shall be saved by the cleanness of his<sup>s</sup> hands.

§ 15. Job: If Man Could Find God, His Problem Would Be Solved, Job 23,  
 24<sup>1-18</sup>, 21-23, 25

### Job 23

- <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:  
<sup>2</sup>Even now<sup>t</sup> my complaint must be bitter,<sup>u</sup>  
 My affliction exceeds my groaning.<sup>v</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>Oh, that I knew where to find him,  
 That I might go straight to his throne!  
<sup>4</sup>I would lay my cause before him,  
 Filling my mouth with arguments.  
<sup>5</sup>I would know the reply he would make,  
 And understand what he would say.  
<sup>6</sup>Would he use his great power against me?  
 No, he at least would give heed.  
<sup>7</sup>There the upright might reason with him;  
 And my case should be settled forever.  
  
<sup>8</sup>I go forward, but he is not there,  
 And backward, but cannot perceive him;  
<sup>9</sup>On the left I seek,<sup>w</sup> but in vain,  
 On the right,<sup>x</sup> but I do not see him.

If God  
 could  
 only be  
 found,  
 Job's  
 vindica-  
 tion is  
 assured

<sup>n</sup> 22<sup>24</sup> Syr., Theod., and Aram., *like*. The meaning of the vs. is, Throw aside mere material possessions.

<sup>o</sup> 22<sup>25</sup> The meaning of the Heb. word is unknown; the above rendering is conjectural.

<sup>p</sup> 22<sup>29</sup> Emending the Heb. as the context demands.

<sup>q</sup> 22<sup>29</sup> Lit., *casts down the eyes*. Cf. Lk. 18<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> 22<sup>30</sup> Again with the aid of the VSS. correcting the Heb., which reads, *not innocent*.

<sup>s</sup> 22<sup>30</sup> So Syr. and Lat. Heb., *your* (sing.), but this is probably due to a scribe who had in mind 42<sup>3</sup>.

§ 15 Henceforth Job ignores his friends. The one supreme question in his mind is whether God is just and will vindicate him. Unlike his friends, Job is passionately eager to know God face to face and not as a distant abstraction. He has lost his old terror of God. In the fiery ordeal through which he is passing he has been convinced of his own essential innocence. His faith in God is also struggling for the ascendancy against the grim facts of life.

<sup>a</sup> 23<sup>1</sup> Lit., *Also today*.

<sup>b</sup> 23<sup>1</sup> So Syr., Targ., Lat., and revised Heb.

<sup>v</sup> 23<sup>1</sup> Lit., *my hand* (Gk., Sah., Syr., and Eth., *his hand*) is heavy upon my sighing. The above rendering follows the interpretation of the rabbis.

<sup>w</sup> 23<sup>9</sup> So Syr. Heb. is unintelligible.

<sup>x</sup> 23<sup>9</sup> Lit., *I turn to the right*. So Syr. and Targ. Heb., *he turns*, but this is not supported by the parallelism.

### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

He will  
yet  
deliver  
me, but  
now his  
attitude  
only  
tempts  
me

Examples  
of the  
seeming  
injustice  
of divine  
rule

- <sup>10</sup>For he knows the way that I take;<sup>γ</sup>  
I should come forth as gold, should he test me.
- <sup>11</sup>My feet have held to his steps,  
His way have I kept without swerving,
- <sup>12</sup>And obeyed his every command.  
I have treasured his words in my heart,<sup>α</sup>
- <sup>13</sup>But when he decides,<sup>α</sup> who can turn him?  
And what he desires, he does.
- <sup>14</sup>For he carries out his decree,<sup>β</sup>  
And has many such things in mind.<sup>ο</sup>
- <sup>15</sup>Therefore his presence confounds me,  
When I think of him, I am afraid.
- <sup>16</sup>For God has made my heart faint,  
The Almighty has filled me with terror;
- <sup>17</sup>For indeed I am<sup>δ</sup> cut off by darkness,  
And gloom envelops my face.<sup>ε</sup>
- 24** <sup>1</sup>Why does the Almighty not fix times for judgment,  
And they who best know him not see his great day?
- <sup>2</sup>The wicked<sup>ι</sup> remove the landmarks,  
They steal the flock with its shepherd,<sup>ε</sup>
- <sup>3</sup>They drive off the ass of the fatherless,  
Take the ox of the widow in pledge.
- <sup>4</sup>They thrust the needy out of the way,  
And the poor of the land all hide.
- <sup>5</sup>Like<sup>β</sup> the wild asses in the desert  
They go forth to their task seeking prey.  
The desert yields food for their children.<sup>ι</sup>
- <sup>6</sup>They reap by night<sup>ι</sup> in the field;  
And they despoil the vines of the rich.<sup>κ</sup>
- <sup>7</sup>All night they<sup>ι</sup> lie naked, without clothing,  
With nothing to keep out the cold.
- <sup>8</sup>They are wet with the showers of the hills  
And cling to the rocks for shelter.
- <sup>9</sup>They<sup>μ</sup> tear the fatherless from the breast,  
Take the poor man's babe in pledge.<sup>η</sup>
- <sup>10</sup>They<sup>ι</sup> go about naked without clothing

<sup>γ</sup> 231<sup>0</sup> *I. e.*, my habitual way.

<sup>α</sup> 231<sup>2</sup> So Gk. and Lat. and demands of the context.

<sup>α</sup> 231<sup>3</sup> Slightly revising the corrupt Heb.

<sup>β</sup> 231<sup>4</sup> So Syr. and Lat. Heb., *my decree*; *i. e.*, what is appointed for me.

<sup>ο</sup> 231<sup>4</sup> Lit., *many such things are with him*.

<sup>δ</sup> 231<sup>7</sup> Following one MS. in deleting the negative.

<sup>ε</sup> 231<sup>7</sup> Deleting *from*, which makes no sense.

<sup>ε</sup> 24<sup>2</sup> So Gk., Sah., Eth., and the demands of the metre and context. Cf. Dt. 19<sup>14</sup>, 27<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>β</sup> 24<sup>2</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *and feed them*.

<sup>ι</sup> 24<sup>5</sup> The VSS. omit *Behold*, found in the Heb.

<sup>ι</sup> 24<sup>5</sup> The text and meaning of this line are somewhat uncertain.

<sup>ι</sup> 24<sup>6</sup> Slightly revising the corrupt Heb. by the aid of Gk.

<sup>κ</sup> 24<sup>6</sup> Heb., *wicked*.

<sup>ι</sup> 24<sup>7</sup> <sup>10</sup>. *I. e.*, the victims of the oppression just described.

<sup>μ</sup> 24<sup>9</sup> Here the wicked oppressors must be meant. The perplexing change of subject may be due to misplacement of some of the vss., yet such ambiguity is not uncommon in Heb.

<sup>η</sup> 24<sup>9</sup> Again revising the Heb., which reads, *take the poor in pledge*.



# JOB

And are hungry as they carry the sheaves.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Between the olive-rows they make oil;  
They tread the winepresses, yet are thirsty.

<sup>12</sup>From the city the dying<sup>p</sup> groan,  
And the souls of the wounded<sup>a</sup> cry out;  
Yet God does not hear their prayer.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>13</sup>These<sup>a</sup> are of those who resent<sup>t</sup> the light;  
They know not its ways,  
Nor dwell<sup>u</sup> in its paths.

Murder-  
ers and  
adulterers

<sup>14</sup>The murderer rises in the dark,<sup>v</sup>  
To kill the poor and the needy,  
And the thief stalks abroad<sup>w</sup> at night.

<sup>15</sup>Putting a mask on his face,<sup>x</sup>  
The adulterer watches for the twilight,  
Saying, 'No eye can see me.'

<sup>16</sup>In the dark he breaks into houses,  
But he shuts himself up by day.  
All these know not the light,

<sup>17</sup>For morning is to them as the shadow of death;<sup>y</sup>

<sup>18</sup>They go swiftly<sup>z</sup> on the face of the waters.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>21</sup>There are those<sup>b</sup> who devour the childless  
And show no kindness to the widow.

Those  
who prey  
on the  
helpless

<sup>22</sup>They drag off the powerless<sup>c</sup> by their might;  
When they rise, none is sure of his life.

<sup>23</sup>Yet he<sup>d</sup> grants them security,<sup>e</sup> and they rest,  
Though he plainly sees their deeds.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>25</sup>If this is not so, who will prove me a liar  
And nullify my indictment?

<sup>o</sup> 24<sup>10</sup> The meaning seems to be that the poor, even while laboring to get food for their oppressors, have not enough to eat for themselves.

<sup>p</sup> 24<sup>12</sup> So Syr. Heb., of men; Gk., and houses.

<sup>q</sup> 24<sup>12</sup> Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth., infants.

<sup>r</sup> 24<sup>12</sup> So Syr., Aram., and implications of the Gk. Heb., the folly.

<sup>s</sup> 24<sup>12</sup> I. e., the classes to be specified in the following vss.

<sup>t</sup> 24<sup>13</sup> Lit., rebel against.

<sup>u</sup> 24<sup>13</sup> Gk., Old Lat., Syr., Eth., walk. This may be original.

<sup>v</sup> 24<sup>14</sup> Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, at light.

<sup>w</sup> 24<sup>14</sup> Emending the Heb., which is clearly the result of a mistake in copying.

<sup>x</sup> 24<sup>15</sup> Transposing the line as the meaning requires.

<sup>y</sup> 24<sup>17</sup> The complement of 17<sup>a</sup> is found in 18<sup>a</sup>. Vs. 17<sup>b</sup>, For they know the terrors of the thick darkness, was probably added by a scribe, and 18<sup>b-20</sup> are either scribal additions or a part of Bildad's speech. Vs. 18<sup>b</sup> reads:

*Their portion is cursed in the earth;  
He turns not the way of vineyards.*

For 19-20, cf. § 16.

<sup>a</sup> 24<sup>18</sup> Slightly revising the Heb.

<sup>b</sup> 24<sup>18</sup> I. e., disappear as swiftly and silently as chips on a swift current.

<sup>c</sup> 24<sup>21</sup> Lit., there is one. The collective singular is used throughout 21-22, but in the plural appears.

<sup>d</sup> 24<sup>23</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., mighty.

<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>23</sup> I. e., God.

<sup>f</sup> 24<sup>23</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb.

<sup>g</sup> 24<sup>23</sup> Lit., his eyes are upon their ways. For 24, cf. § 16.

### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

#### § 16. Bildad: It Is Impossible for Man to Be Perfect in God's Sight, Job 25, 24<sup>19-20, 24</sup>

No man  
can be  
just  
with  
God

#### Job 25

- <sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:  
<sup>2</sup>Dominion and fear are with God;  
He makes peace in the heights of heaven.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>Has he not innumerable armies?  
And on whom does his light not arise?  
<sup>4</sup>How can man then be just before God?  
And one born of a woman be pure?  
<sup>5</sup>See, even the moon has no brightness,<sup>b</sup>  
And the stars are not pure in his sight;<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>How much less is man, a mere worm,  
And the son of man but a maggot!

Fate  
of the  
sinner

- 24 <sup>19</sup>Drought<sup>d</sup> and heat consume the snow waters;  
So Sheol the man who has sinned.  
<sup>20</sup>The womb shall forget him;  
The worm shall feed sweetly on him.  
He shall be no more remembered;  
He shall be uprooted like a rotten tree.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>24</sup>He is exalted a little while and is gone;  
Like the mallow he is laid low and shrivels,<sup>f</sup>  
Cut off like the top of an ear of grain.

#### § 17. Job: Guilt Does Not Explain All Suffering, Job 26-27<sup>g</sup>, 13

Sorry  
com-  
forters

#### Job 26

- <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered:  
<sup>2</sup>How well you have helped the weak,  
Relieved the arm of the powerless,  
<sup>3</sup>Counselled the man with no wisdom,  
Poured forth in abundance sound knowledge!  
<sup>4</sup>By whose help have you uttered these words,  
And whose spirit inspired your speech?

§ 16 Bildad's speech is exceedingly brief. Apparently a later editor has taken one section of it and used it to tone down Job's arraignment of Jehovah's justice as revealed in the world. Restoring 24<sup>19-20, 24</sup> to their logical position, this much-disarranged part of the book presents a clear sequence of thought. Some scholars would go further and also transfer to Bildad's speech 24<sup>1-8</sup>, 30<sup>3-8</sup>, and 24<sup>17-18</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 25<sup>2</sup> *I. e.*, he establishes peace, not disorder.

<sup>b</sup> 25<sup>5</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth., *He commands the moon and it shines not*; but the Heb. gives the more perfect parallelism.

<sup>c</sup> 25<sup>5</sup> Repeated very effectively from 15<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> 24<sup>19</sup> As explained above, the position of these vss. in the present text is probably due to an editor.

<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>20</sup> Following Duhm in restoring the impossible Heb.

<sup>f</sup> 24<sup>24</sup> Restoring the corrupt Heb. with the aid of the VSS.

§ 17 For the last time Job reproaches his friends for their perfidy in not giving him help when he most needed it. He admits all their claims regarding God's invincible might, but this omnipotence only makes God's treatment of the innocent Job seem the more cruel and unjust. Yet despite the condemnation of his friends and seemingly of God himself, Job protests his innocence. In the Gk. 26<sup>8-11</sup> is omitted, but this was probably because the translator thought that it was a repetition of Job's words in 9<sup>1</sup> <sup>g</sup>.

# JOB

Omnipotence of God's rule

- <sup>6</sup>Before him in pain writhe the Rephaim,<sup>m</sup>  
Whose dwellings<sup>a</sup> are beneath the waters.  
<sup>6</sup>Sheol is naked before him,  
And the lower world lies uncovered.  
<sup>7</sup>He stretches out the north<sup>a</sup> over chaos,  
And hangs the earth upon nothing.  
<sup>8</sup>He binds up the waters in his clouds,  
Yet the clouds are not torn with the weight.  
<sup>9</sup>He sets firm the pillars of his throne,<sup>p</sup>  
And over it spreads his cloud.  
<sup>10</sup>He drew a circle<sup>a</sup> o'er the face of the waters  
To the confines of light and darkness.  
<sup>11</sup>The pillars of heaven rock  
And are filled with consternation at his rebuke.<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>By his power he stilled<sup>a</sup> the sea,  
And by his understanding he smote through Rahab.<sup>t</sup>  
<sup>13</sup>By his breath the heavens are made fair,<sup>u</sup>  
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.  
<sup>14</sup>See, these are but the fringes of his ways;  
How small a whisper do we hear of him!  
But who can understand his mighty thunder?

- 27 <sup>2</sup>As God lives,<sup>v</sup> who has robbed me of justice,  
The Almighty, who makes me bitter  
<sup>3</sup>(For my life is still intact,  
And the spirit of God fills my nostrils),  
<sup>4</sup>I swear that my lips speak no falsehood,  
My tongue does not utter deceit.  
<sup>5</sup>Far be it from me to admit you are right;  
Till I die, I will never disclaim innocence.  
<sup>6</sup>My innocence I hold fast and will not give it up;  
My heart does not reproach me for any of my acts.<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>You<sup>x</sup> have all seen it with your own eyes;  
Why then this inane folly?

Protestation of innocence

<sup>m</sup> 26<sup>s</sup> *I. e.*, the Shades, the fallen giants who, like the Titans of Greek thought, were believed to inhabit the realm of the dead whither they had been banished.

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>t</sup> Slightly revising the Heb.

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>r</sup> The north probably represents the earth.

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>9</sup> Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, *he takes firm hold of the face of the throne.*

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>10</sup> *I. e.*, the horizon.

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>11</sup> *I. e.*, the roll of his thunder.

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>12</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. The Heb. word means both *disturb* and *be still*.

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>13</sup> Rahab is evidently the Heb. equivalent of the Bab. Tiamat. The reference is to the conflict with Tiamat, or personified chaos, which is recounted in the old Bab. account of the creation (cf. Vol. I, Appendix III).

<sup>a</sup> 26<sup>14</sup> *I. e.*, cleared of clouds. Gk., *The bars of heaven fear him.*

<sup>v</sup> 27<sup>1</sup> Vs. 1 reads, *And Job again took up his parable and said*, but this is evidently a scribal addition modelled after 29<sup>1</sup>, for 27<sup>1-2</sup> is the direct continuation of 26.

<sup>w</sup> 27<sup>6</sup> *Lit.*, *days*. The next vs. (27<sup>11</sup>) seem to be misplaced, for they are much more in accord with Zophar's point of view than with Job's (cf. § 18).

<sup>x</sup> 27<sup>12</sup> This vs. is the logical sequel of <sup>a</sup> and finds no place in its present context, which, as remarked above, probably belongs to Zophar's speech (§ 18).

### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

§ 18. Zophar: The Pitiable Fate of the Wicked, Job 27<sup>7-11</sup>, 13-23

**Job 27**

[Then Zophar the Naamathite answered:]

<sup>7</sup>Let my enemy be like the wicked,

My adversary like the unrighteous.

<sup>8</sup>For what is the hope of a godless man,

When God requires his soul?<sup>v</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Will God give heed to his cry

When trouble comes upon him?

<sup>10</sup>Will the Almighty then be his delight,

And if he calls upon God, will he hear him?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>I will teach you about the hand of God,

And I will not conceal the way of the Almighty.

<sup>13</sup>This is the wicked man's portion from God,

And what an oppressor<sup>a</sup> receives from the Almighty:

<sup>14</sup>If his children are many, the sword claims them,

And his descendants are not satisfied with food.

<sup>15</sup>The remnant of them shall be buried by death,<sup>b</sup>

And their widows shall make no lament.

<sup>16</sup>Though he heap up silver like dust

And prepare clothing like the clay,

<sup>17</sup>He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on,

And the innocent shall divide the silver.

<sup>18</sup>Like a spider's<sup>c</sup> is the house that he builds,

Like a booth<sup>d</sup> which the vine-keeper makes.

<sup>19</sup>He lies down rich, but does so no more;<sup>e</sup>

He opens his eyes, and he is not.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Terrors overtake him like floods;

A tempest steals him away in the night.

<sup>21</sup>The east wind lifts him up, and he departs;

It sweeps him out of his place.

<sup>22</sup>It smites him without mercy;

He would gladly escape from its power.

<sup>23</sup>Men shall clap their hands at him

And hiss him out of his place.

---

§ 18 In the editorial revision of 24-27 not only was a secondary title added in 27<sup>1</sup>, but the original title introducing Zophar's speech, which in the logical order concluded the last cycle, has been omitted. Possibly this was done intentionally, in order that Job might end with an orthodox confession of faith.

<sup>v</sup> 27<sup>8</sup> Revising the Heb. with the aid of the Gk. and Syr. and deleting the phrase *though he get gain*, which makes little sense, destroys the metre of the vs., and is probably a duplicate of the last line. Cf. Lk. 12<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 27<sup>10</sup> Following the Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth., which are strongly supported by the context.

<sup>b</sup> 27<sup>13</sup> Heb., *oppressors*, but the context, <sup>14</sup>, calls for the singular.

<sup>c</sup> 27<sup>18</sup> *I. e.*, cut down by pestilence they shall be left where they fall.

<sup>d</sup> 27<sup>18</sup> So Syr., Old Lat., Sah., and one version of the Gk. Heb., *moth*.

<sup>e</sup> 27<sup>19</sup> *I. e.*, temporary, perishable.

<sup>f</sup> 27<sup>19</sup> Following the Gk. and Syr. in interpreting the Heb.

<sup>1</sup> 27<sup>19</sup> *I. e.*, probably, not rich, though death may be meant.

# JOB

## § 19. Job: To Lose the Consciousness of Fellowship with God Is the Supreme Misfortune, Job 29-30

Job 29

<sup>1</sup>Job again took up his discourse and said:<sup>κ</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>Oh, to be as in months of old,  
 As in days when God guarded my steps,  
<sup>3</sup>When his lamp shone above my head,  
 And I walked by his light through the darkness;  
<sup>4</sup>As I was in my prosperous days,<sup>h</sup>  
 When God protected<sup>i</sup> my tent;  
<sup>5</sup>When still the Almighty was with me,  
 And my children were all about me;<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>When peace and plenty attended me,  
 And the rock<sup>k</sup> poured me streams of oil!  
<sup>7</sup>When I went to the gate of the city,<sup>l</sup>  
 And took my seat in the open,  
<sup>8</sup>The youths, when they saw me, retired,  
 And the aged rose up and stood;  
<sup>9</sup>The princes refrained from talking,  
 And laid their hands on their mouths;  
<sup>10</sup>The voices of nobles were hushed,  
 And their tongues stuck fast to their palates.

Job's  
former  
pros-  
perity

<sup>11</sup>He<sup>m</sup> who heard of me called me happy,  
 He who saw me bore me witness,  
<sup>12</sup>For I saved the poor who cried,<sup>n</sup>  
 And the orphan with none to help him.  
<sup>13</sup>The perishing gave me their blessing,  
 And I made the widow's heart sing.  
<sup>14</sup>I put on the garment of righteousness,  
 And justice<sup>o</sup> as robe and turban.  
<sup>15</sup>Eyes I was to the blind,  
 Feet I was to the lame,  
<sup>16</sup>And a father to those who were needy.  
 I espoused the cause of the stranger,

Righteous  
and  
philan-  
thropic  
acts

§ 19 With 27 the discussion between Job and his friends ceased; now he is left alone with his own thoughts. In 29 he reviews his happy and honorable past. This retrospect yields him mingled joy and sorrow, but on the whole the sad lyric note predominates, for the joyous background only brings out in clearer relief the woes of the present. By some the section 30<sup>3-5</sup> is regarded as a disjected member of Bildad's speech, but it is not inappropriate in its present setting, for it heightens the tragic picture of Job in his hour of mental distress, the object of derision even to the offscourings of humanity.

<sup>κ</sup> 29<sup>1</sup> Possibly the editor who introduced 28 has added this verse.

<sup>h</sup> 29<sup>4</sup> Lit., *days of my autumn*; *i. e.*, when I was at my best.

<sup>i</sup> 29<sup>4</sup> Following the Gk., Sym., and Syr. in slightly revising the text as the context requires; cf. 1<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>j</sup> 29<sup>5</sup> The loss of God's friendship is too painful a theme to be expanded.

<sup>k</sup> 29<sup>6</sup> Gk., Syr., Eth., and Sah. read, *my hills*; *i. e.*, the hills planted with vineyards. This reading may be original.

<sup>l</sup> 29<sup>7</sup> *I. e.*, the place of public meeting.

<sup>m</sup> 29<sup>11</sup> *For* was probably introduced by <sup>n</sup> scribe to connect 10 and 11. Restoring the logical order of the passage makes it superfluous.

<sup>n</sup> 29<sup>12</sup> Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth., *from the oppressor*. Possibly this is original.

<sup>o</sup> 29<sup>14</sup> Heb., *my justice*, but VSS. omit *my*.



### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

<sup>17</sup>I shattered the jaws of the wicked,  
And wrested the prey from his teeth.

Hopes

<sup>18</sup>So I thought, 'I shall die in my nest;<sup>p</sup>  
My days shall be as many as the sand;<sup>q</sup>  
<sup>19</sup>My root is spread out to the waters;  
All night the dew lies on my branches;  
<sup>20</sup>My strength is refreshed within me,  
And my bow is renewed in my hand.'

Honor  
in the  
commu-  
nity

<sup>21</sup>Men listened to me expectantly,  
And in silence awaited my counsel.  
<sup>22</sup>After my words they spoke not,  
And my speech fell as rain-drops upon them.  
<sup>23</sup>They waited for me as for the rain,  
Open-mouthed as for the latter rain.  
<sup>24</sup>I smiled on them, when they had no confidence;  
The light of my countenance cheered the sorrowful.  
<sup>25</sup>I chose the way for them, and sat as chief,  
I was enthroned as a king in the army.

The  
present:  
the  
derision  
of the  
lowest  
and most  
despised  
members  
of society

**30** <sup>1</sup>But now men younger than I deride me,  
Whose fathers I refused to set with the dogs of my flock!<sup>r</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>The strength of their hands is nothing to me—<sup>s</sup>  
Men in whom all vigor has perished.  
<sup>3</sup>They are gaunt from want and famine;  
They gnaw the dry ground<sup>t</sup> amid<sup>u</sup> waste and desolation.  
<sup>4</sup>They pull up the shoots of salt-wort,<sup>v</sup>  
And the roots of the broom are their food.  
<sup>5</sup>They are driven forth from the midst of men,  
Who cry after them as after a thief,<sup>w</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>So that they live in dreadful valleys,  
In holes of the earth and rocks.  
<sup>7</sup>From among the bushes they cry out;  
Under the nettles they are gathered together.<sup>x</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>They are the children of fools and ignoble men;  
They are scourged out of the land.  
<sup>9</sup>But they sing of me now in derision,  
And my name is a by-word among them.

<sup>p</sup> 29<sup>18</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth., *my youth shall grow old*.

<sup>q</sup> 29<sup>18</sup> Gk. and Lat., *like the palm tree*, which may be original, for the palm-tree lives to a very old age and retains its beauty and vigor.

<sup>r</sup> 30<sup>1</sup> This vs. has apparently been expanded by a later scribe.

<sup>s</sup> 30<sup>2</sup> Duhm (Hiob 140-141) emends the text so that it reads, *fails*.

<sup>t</sup> 30<sup>3</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth., *They flee to the wilderness*.

<sup>u</sup> 30<sup>3</sup> Following a revised text.

<sup>v</sup> 30<sup>4</sup> Lit., *salt-wort by the bushes* (or *shoots*).

<sup>w</sup> 30<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, men warn them to depart whenever they appear near settled towns.

<sup>x</sup> 30<sup>7</sup> The VSS. have a variety of renderings: Gk., *live*; Eth., *hide*. There are two Heb. words having the same root; one has the meaning given above, the other would mean *were begotten* (cf. <sup>y</sup>).

# JOB

<sup>10</sup>In horror they stand aloof from me,  
And do not refrain from spitting at the sight of me.  
<sup>11</sup>For he has loosed my bow-string<sup>v</sup> and afflicted,  
And they have<sup>a</sup> cast off the bridle<sup>a</sup> before me.  
<sup>12</sup>On my right hand rise the rabble;<sup>b</sup>  
They cast up against me their deadly ramparts;  
<sup>13</sup>They break up my paths;<sup>c</sup>  
They set forward my calamity;<sup>d</sup>  
They hurl their darts against me,<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>14</sup>As through a wide breach they come,  
Rolling on in the midst of ruin.  
<sup>15</sup>Terrors are turned upon me;  
My honor is driven away<sup>f</sup> as the wind,  
And my welfare has passed like a cloud.

<sup>16</sup>And now my life is poured out within me;  
Days of affliction have taken hold of me.  
<sup>17</sup>The night bores into my bones,<sup>g</sup>  
And my gnawing pains never cease.  
<sup>18</sup>With great force my garment clings to me;<sup>h</sup>  
It binds me about as the collar of my coat.  
<sup>19</sup>God<sup>i</sup> has cast me into the mire,  
And I have become like dust and ashes.  
<sup>20</sup>I cry to thee, but thou makest no answer,  
I stand up before thee, but thou dost not heed.<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>21</sup>Thou hast become a merciless tyrant;  
With the might of thy hand thou scourgest<sup>k</sup> me.  
<sup>22</sup>Thou liftest me up to ride on the wind,  
And dissolvest me in the roaring storm.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>23</sup>For I know that thou wilt bring me to death,  
To the house where all living assemble.  
<sup>24</sup>Yet a falling man stretches forth his hand,  
And in his calamity cries for help.<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>25</sup>Did I not weep for the one in trouble?

Now  
wracked  
with pain  
and per-  
secuted  
by God

Yet he  
ever  
helped  
the  
afflicted

<sup>v</sup> 30<sup>11</sup> So Syr. and Targ. Heb., *his cord*; i. e., his support.  
<sup>a</sup> 30<sup>11</sup> Theod., Eth., and Lat., *he has*, but Heb. is probably original.  
<sup>b</sup> 30<sup>11</sup> I. e., all restraint.  
<sup>c</sup> 30<sup>12</sup> Through an inaccurate scribal repetition of <sup>11b</sup> the Heb. adds, *they cast off my feet*; but this makes no sense.  
<sup>d</sup> 30<sup>13</sup> So 3 MSS., Theod., Syr., Lat., Targ. Heb., *path*.  
<sup>e</sup> 30<sup>13</sup> This seems to be the meaning of the Heb., but the text is doubtful.  
<sup>f</sup> 30<sup>15</sup> Revising the Heb. with the aid of the Gk.  
<sup>g</sup> 30<sup>16</sup> So Gk. Heb., *they drive away*.  
<sup>h</sup> 30<sup>17</sup> So Gk. Heb. adds, *from upon me*.  
<sup>i</sup> 30<sup>19</sup> Revising the corrupt Heb. as suggested by Gk., Sah., and Eth. The meaning is that his festering sores have produced this effect.  
<sup>j</sup> 30<sup>20</sup> Supplying the subject implied in the Heb.  
<sup>k</sup> 30<sup>21</sup> So one MS. and Lat. Heb. omits *not*.  
<sup>l</sup> 30<sup>22</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *persecutest*.  
<sup>m</sup> 30<sup>24</sup> The author apparently draws his figures here from the old Bab. account of Marduk's contest with Tiamat or Chaos, in which he used the winds as his weapons  
<sup>n</sup> 30<sup>24</sup> Slightly revising the Heb.

### THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Did not my heart deeply grieve for the needy?<sup>25</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>I looked for good, but evil came,  
 I hoped for light, but darkness descended.

#### § 20. Job's Oath of Clearance, Job 31

#### Job 31

Lust

<sup>1</sup>A contract have I made with my eyes;  
 How then could I gaze on<sup>a</sup> a virgin?  
<sup>2</sup>And what is God's allotment from above,  
 The Almighty's bequest from on high?  
<sup>3</sup>Is it not calamity to the unrighteous  
 And disaster to those who do wrong?  
<sup>4</sup>Does he not see my conduct?  
 And number all my steps?

Dishonesty

<sup>5</sup>If I have ever indulged in falsehood,  
 Or I have been eager to practise deceit,  
<sup>6</sup>Then let God weigh me on scales that are just,  
 And he will acknowledge that I am innocent.  
<sup>7</sup>If ever my step has swerved from the way,  
 Or my heart has followed my own inclination,<sup>a</sup>  
 Or if any spot besmirches my hands,  
<sup>8</sup>Then let me sow and another eat,  
 And let all my produce be rooted up.  
<sup>9</sup>If I have ever been lured by a woman,  
 Or lain in wait at my neighbor's door,  
<sup>10</sup>Then let my wife grind as a slave for another,  
 And let other men bow down upon her;  
<sup>11</sup>For adultery is a heinous crime,  
 A crime indeed that calls for judgment,  
<sup>12</sup>A fire that eats to the depths of hell,  
 And it would completely consume all my increase.

Adultery

Disregard  
 of ser-  
 vants'  
 rights

<sup>13</sup>If I had spurned the cause of my servant,  
 And that of my maid, when they argued against me;  
<sup>14</sup>What would I do when God takes vengeance?  
 And when he accuses me, what would I answer?  
<sup>15</sup>Did not he who made me create him also,  
 And the same one fashion us each in the womb?

<sup>a</sup> 30<sup>25</sup> Or following Duhm in reconstructing the Heb. so as to connect this vs. with 24:

*Or does he not weep who is in trouble?  
 Is not the soul of the needy grieved?*

§ 20 Just as the rebukes of his friends have grown into definite accusations, so now Job brings to a climax his protestations of innocence by denying that he is guilty of this or that specific sin which might justly have incurred the divine wrath. In so doing he presents a remarkably lofty standard of personal and social righteousness.

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>1</sup> Lit., *consider attentively*.

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>4</sup> Lit., *ways*.

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>7</sup> Lit., *walked after my eyes*.

# JOB

<sup>18</sup>From<sup>r</sup> the days of my youth like a father he reared me,  
And he was my guide from the time I was born.

<sup>16</sup>If I have denied the poor their desire,  
Or disappointed the hopes<sup>a</sup> of the widow,

Neglect  
of the  
poor

<sup>17</sup>Or if I have eaten my morsel alone,  
So that the fatherless has not shared it;

<sup>19</sup>If I have seen any naked and perishing,  
Or anyone needy with nothing to cover him,

<sup>20</sup>If the loins of such have not blessed my gifts,  
And his body been warmed by a fleece from my sheep;

<sup>21</sup>If against the just I have raised my hands,  
Because I saw an ally in the court,

<sup>22</sup>Let my shoulder then fall from its blade,  
And my arm be wrenched from the socket.

<sup>23</sup>For the fear of God restrains me,  
And his majesty renders me helpless.

<sup>24</sup>If I have put my faith in gold,  
And have said to fine gold, 'In you I trust!'

Trust in  
riches

<sup>25</sup>If I have rejoiced that my wealth is great,  
And because my hand has gained much—

<sup>26</sup>If e'er I have seen the light<sup>t</sup> shining,  
Or the moon riding high<sup>u</sup> in her glory,<sup>v</sup>

Idolatry

<sup>27</sup>And in secret my heart has been lured,<sup>w</sup>  
And my hand has kissed my mouth,<sup>x</sup>

<sup>28</sup>This too were a crime fit for judgment,<sup>y</sup>  
For I should have betrayed<sup>z</sup> God on high.

<sup>29</sup>If I have rejoiced at my enemy's ruin,  
Or exulted when evil befell him,

Venge-  
fulness

<sup>30</sup>If I have permitted my mouth to sin  
By demanding his life with a curse—

<sup>31</sup>If the men of my household<sup>a</sup> have not said,  
'Who is not satisfied with his food?'

Lack of  
hospi-  
tality

<sup>32</sup>If ever a stranger has lodged in the street,  
Or I have not opened my doors to the traveler—

---

<sup>r</sup> 31<sup>18</sup> Transposing this verse as required by the sequence of thought.

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>16</sup> Lit., *caused the eyes to fail*.

<sup>t</sup> 31<sup>26</sup> *I. e.*, the sun.

<sup>u</sup> 31<sup>26</sup> Lit., *walking*.

<sup>v</sup> 31<sup>26</sup> Lit., *as a glorious one*.

<sup>w</sup> 31<sup>27</sup> The same verb used in <sup>9</sup>.

<sup>x</sup> 31<sup>27</sup> *I. e.*, I have thrown a kiss, a gesture of worship well known in ancient idolatry. Worship of the heavenly bodies is often condemned by the prophets.

<sup>y</sup> 31<sup>28</sup> Cp. <sup>11</sup>. The language suggests a parallel between adultery and idolatry, quite in the spirit of the prophets.

<sup>z</sup> 31<sup>28</sup> Lit., *deceived or failed*.

<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>31</sup> Lit., *tent*.

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

Hypoc-  
risy

<sup>23</sup>If like Adam I hid my wrong-doing,  
By concealing my guilt in my bosom,  
<sup>24</sup>Because of my fear of the multitude,  
And my dread of public contempt,  
And kept silent behind closed doors—

Bad  
farming

<sup>25</sup>If<sup>b</sup> my land cries out against me,  
And its furrows weep together;  
<sup>30</sup>If I have eaten its fruits without paying,  
And caused its owners to lose their lives,  
<sup>40</sup>Let thistles grow instead of wheat,  
And stinking weeds instead of barley.

Job's  
closing  
challenge

<sup>35</sup>Oh, for someone to hear me!  
Behold my defense all signed!<sup>o</sup>  
Let now the Almighty answer,  
My Adversary write<sup>d</sup> the indictment!  
<sup>26</sup>On my shoulder I would bear it,<sup>e</sup>  
As a crown I would bind it round me;  
<sup>27</sup>I would tell him my every act;  
Like a prince I would enter his presence!

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS REGARDING THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

### § 21. Elihu's Reasons for Speaking, Job 32

**Job 32** <sup>1</sup>So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. <sup>2</sup>Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the

<sup>b</sup> 31<sup>38</sup> Transposing vss. 35-37 to the end, where they clearly belong.

<sup>c</sup> 31<sup>38</sup> Lit., *Behold my mark!*

<sup>d</sup> 31<sup>38</sup> So Syr. and Lat. Heb., *wrote*. Possibly a line has dropped out before this, as the two preceding lines of the translation form only one in Heb.

<sup>e</sup> 31<sup>38</sup> *I. e.*, proudly display it.

Reflections of Later Generations Regarding Suffering.—The cumulative reasons for regarding the Elihu speeches as later additions to the original drama of Job have been suggested in the Introd., p. 33. The reader misses at every point the majestic style of the master poet. Tiresome repetition takes the place of the rapid onward flow of the great poem. These repetitions are so many and marked that some recent writers (*e. g.*, Barton in his *Commentary on Job*, 19-29) have maintained that two originally independent criticisms of the lyric drama of Job have been combined. The one is addressed to Job and is found in 32<sup>1</sup>, 6-10, 12-24, 33<sup>1-32</sup>, 35<sup>2-14</sup>, 36<sup>2-5</sup>, 10<sup>a</sup>, 6, 12, 14, 16, 16<sup>b</sup>, 7<sup>a</sup>, 18-25, 27<sup>a</sup>, 28<sup>b</sup>, 33, 37<sup>1</sup>, 5<sup>b</sup>, 6<sup>a</sup>, 7-10, 14-24; the other, addressed to Job's friends, is found in 32<sup>2a</sup>, 3<sup>a</sup>, 17, 11-16, 34<sup>1-24</sup>, 28, 27, 35<sup>15</sup>, 19, 34<sup>34-37</sup>. While the hypothesis is not impossible, it implies such a complex disarrangement of the text that it is highly improbable. The duplicates are more easily explained as the repetitions of a verbose writer, exceedingly eager to drive home his doctrines, who addresses in turn Job and his friends, condemning the latter because of their failure to do justice to the orthodox arguments, even more than Job himself. The genuineness of these Elihu speeches has been defended by Budde, Cornill, Briggs, and Genuing, and while their claims have not gained general acceptance, they have served to call attention to the fact that the thought presented in these chaps. possesses a larger intrinsic value than its literary form would suggest. In general Elihu expands Eliphaz's argument that suffering has a character-developing value. These speeches represent the later orthodox criticism and thinking regarding the conclusions presented in the lyric drama. The literary style and frequent Aramaisms suggest that they were written during the early part of the Gk. period and came from the same period, if not the same author, as the noble description of wisdom in chap. 28.

§ 21 The awkward repetitions in the prose introduction (1-5), which anticipate the direct statements of Elihu in 6-22, suggest that possibly it was written by a still later editor or reviser. Although Elihu, as presented in this chapter, is not distinguished for his modesty, he is intensely earnest. Through his lips the later poet boldly criticises what seem to him to be the dangerous weaknesses in the lyric drama. It is clear that he wrote before the drama had been canonized. At the same time he draws most of his ideas from the greater poet whom he censures.



## ELIHU

Buzite of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job, because he had maintained that he was more just than God. <sup>3</sup>Also his wrath was aroused against his three friends, because they had found no answer and yet had condemned<sup>a</sup> Job. <sup>4</sup>Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job,<sup>b</sup> because they were older than he. <sup>5</sup>But when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these men, his wrath was aroused. <sup>6</sup>So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, spoke up and said,

<sup>6</sup>I am but young in years,  
While you are very old,  
And so I held back, and feared  
To tell you my opinion.  
<sup>7</sup>I felt that days should speak,  
That the mature<sup>c</sup> should teach wisdom.

Elihu's  
hesitation

<sup>8</sup>But there is a spirit in men,<sup>d</sup>  
The Almighty's breath gives them insight.  
<sup>9</sup>The aged<sup>e</sup> are not always wise,  
Nor do elders best discern truth.  
<sup>10</sup>Therefore I urge you to hear me,  
While I, too, state my opinion.

His  
deter-  
mination  
to speak

<sup>11</sup>I waited<sup>f</sup> while you spoke,<sup>g</sup>  
And listened to your reasoning;  
While you carefully chose your words,  
<sup>12</sup>I gave to you close heed.  
But none brought conviction to Job,  
Not one of you refuted his claims.  
<sup>13</sup>Say not, 'We have found wisdom;  
God must vanquish him, not man;'  
<sup>14</sup>For his words are not directed against me;  
Nor will I give him answers like yours.<sup>h</sup>

Because  
Job's  
friends  
have  
failed

<sup>15</sup>Amazed, they answer no more,  
They have not a word to say.  
<sup>16</sup>Must I wait because they are silent  
And stand thus, with no further answer?  
<sup>17</sup>I too will answer my part;  
I too will state my opinion.

Elihu's  
convic-  
tions  
compel  
him to  
speak

<sup>a</sup> 32<sup>a</sup> Syr. and certain Gk. MSS. read, *justified*; i. e., by their failure to find fitting answers had virtually conceded the justice of Job's position.

<sup>b</sup> 32<sup>a</sup> Or *until they had spoken to Job*.

<sup>c</sup> 32<sup>a</sup> Lit., *multitude of years*; i. e., those who have had the experience of many years.

<sup>d</sup> 32<sup>a</sup> Sym., *The spirit of God is in man*.

<sup>e</sup> 32<sup>a</sup> So the VSS. Heb., *great*.

<sup>f</sup> 32<sup>11</sup> Vss. 11-14 are omitted by the Gk. and may be secondary. They really duplicate 15-17. Nichols (AJSL, XXVII, 126 ff.) and Barton regard them as the introduction to the further address to the friends in 34<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> 32<sup>11</sup> Possibly this line originally followed 12<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> 32<sup>13</sup> I. e., it is not yet necessary to turn the case over to God, for Job still has Elihu to deal with.

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

Hy  
ria

Bas  
fari

Job  
closes  
cha

Calls  
upon  
Job to  
answer  
him if  
he can

### Job 33

Job's  
claim  
that God  
is his  
enemy  
unfound-  
ed

- <sup>18</sup>For full of words am I;  
The spirit within compels me.  
<sup>19</sup>My breast is like wine without vent,  
Like new wine-skins ready to burst.  
<sup>20</sup>I must speak and so find relief,  
I must open my lips and answer.  
<sup>21</sup>I would show partiality to none,  
Nor give flattering titles to any man.  
<sup>22</sup>For of flattery I know nothing,  
Else soon would my Maker remove me.

### § 22. The Value of Pain, Job 33

- <sup>1</sup>So now, Job, hear my speech,  
And listen to all that I say.  
<sup>2</sup>See, I have opened my mouth,  
My tongue has begun to speak.  
<sup>3</sup>My words shall reveal the uprightness of my heart,<sup>1</sup>  
And what my lips know they shall speak sincerely.  
<sup>4</sup>Then<sup>1</sup> answer me, if you can,  
Stand forth, and debate<sup>k</sup> with me.  
<sup>6</sup>In the sight of God I am like you,  
I, too, was formed out of clay.<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>The spirit of God has made me,  
The Almighty's breath gives me life.  
<sup>7</sup>No dread of me need appal you,<sup>m</sup>  
And my hand<sup>n</sup> shall not rest on you heavily.  
  
<sup>8</sup>Surely you have spoken in my hearing,  
And I have heard the sound of your words:  
<sup>9</sup><sup>1</sup>I am clean, without transgression;  
I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me.<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>See, he finds occasions against me;  
He counts me as his enemy.<sup>p</sup>  
<sup>11</sup>He puts my feet in the stocks;  
He keeps watch over all my paths.<sup>q</sup>

§ 22 After rebuking Job and his bold appeal directly to the Almighty, the poet develops his chief positive contribution Eliphaz's teaching that no mortal can be righteous before God (3) and happy is the man whom God corrects (5<sup>17</sup>). Like Eliphaz, he also prepares a song of thanksgiving to be sung when once Job truly repents.

<sup>1</sup> 33<sup>3</sup> Or with Duhm slightly revising the Heb. text so as to read, *My mind inspires words*.  
<sup>1</sup> 33<sup>5</sup> Vss. 4, 6 have through a scribal error been transposed.

<sup>k</sup> 33<sup>5</sup> Lit., *set in order* (sc. your words or arguments). For the full idiom, cf. 32<sup>14</sup>, where same verb is translated *directed*.

<sup>1</sup> 33<sup>6</sup> I. e., I am not God, against whom Job had complained in 31<sup>15</sup> that he must plead cause.

<sup>m</sup> 33<sup>7</sup> In 9<sup>34</sup> and 13<sup>21</sup> Job had complained that God's terror overpowered him.

<sup>n</sup> 33<sup>7</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *urgency*.

<sup>o</sup> 33<sup>9</sup> Cf. 9<sup>21</sup>, 10<sup>7</sup>, 13<sup>18</sup>, 16<sup>17</sup>, 23<sup>7</sup>, 10-12, 31. Elihu, however, heightens Job's assertion.

<sup>p</sup> 33<sup>10</sup> Cf. 13<sup>24</sup>. The Heb. text is slightly corrupt.

<sup>q</sup> 33<sup>11</sup> Cf. 13<sup>27</sup>.

# ELIHU

<sup>12</sup>How can you say, 'I cry and he does not answer;  
God hides himself from men'?<sup>r</sup>

God's  
various  
ways of  
speaking  
to men:

<sup>13</sup>Why do you strive against God,  
Because he gives you no answer?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>For God has one way of speaking,  
Yes, two, but he does not repeat it:

<sup>15</sup>In a dream, in a vision of night,  
When deep sleep falls upon men,<sup>t</sup>  
As they slumber upon their beds,

By  
visions

<sup>16</sup>Then he opens the ears of men,  
And instructs them by terrible warnings,<sup>u</sup>

<sup>17</sup>To turn men aside from wrong-doing,<sup>v</sup>  
And to save their bodies from ruin.<sup>w</sup>

<sup>18</sup>To keep them back from the grave,  
And their lives from descending to hell.<sup>x</sup>

<sup>19</sup>On a bed of pain he is chastened,  
And all his bones grow stiff,<sup>y</sup>

By pain  
and  
sickness

<sup>20</sup>He<sup>z</sup> utterly loathes all bread,  
And abhors the daintiest food.

<sup>21</sup>His flesh is wasted and lean,<sup>a</sup>  
And all his bones stick out.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>22</sup>His soul draws near to the grave,  
And his life to the angels of death.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>23</sup>If there be with him an ange.,  
An interpreter,<sup>d</sup> one of a thousand,  
To make known to man what is right,<sup>e</sup>

Fortunate  
is he if  
he has  
a wise  
inter-  
preter

<sup>24</sup>Then God will be gracious and say:  
'Deliver him from the grave;  
I have found for his life<sup>f</sup> a ransom.'<sup>g</sup>

<sup>25</sup>His flesh shall be fresh as a child's,  
And the days of his youth shall return.

<sup>26</sup>He prays to God and finds favor

<sup>r</sup> 33<sup>12</sup> Revising with Duhm by the aid of the Gk. The references are to Job's words in 9<sup>12</sup>, 19<sup>7</sup>, 30<sup>20</sup>, and 13<sup>24</sup>, 23<sup>8-9</sup>, 26<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> 33<sup>13</sup> Lit., *he answers none of his words*, but a change in the pronominal suffix from *his* to *your* gives the original meaning intended.

<sup>t</sup> 33<sup>15</sup> Evidently Elihu has in mind the impressive opening speech of Eliphaz, 4<sup>13-15</sup>.

<sup>u</sup> 33<sup>16</sup> So Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *and seals their instruction*, which is apparently due to a corruption of the text and lacks the usual number of measured beats to complete the metre.

<sup>v</sup> 33<sup>17</sup> Following the VSS. in reconstructing the first part of the line.

<sup>w</sup> 33<sup>17</sup> Again following the VSS. Heb., *hide pride from man*, but this is exceedingly awkward.

<sup>x</sup> 33<sup>18</sup> Revising the Heb., which reads, *passing away by a missile*.

<sup>y</sup> 33<sup>19</sup> That the Heb. is corrupt is indicated by the wide variety of versional readings. The rendering given above is based on the Gk. and a revised Heb. text.

<sup>z</sup> 33<sup>20</sup> Lit., *his life*.

<sup>a</sup> 33<sup>21</sup> Making a slight change in the Heb. as required by the context.

<sup>b</sup> 33<sup>21</sup> The reading of this line is not certain.

<sup>c</sup> 33<sup>22</sup> Lit., *the destroyers*. The VSS. give various readings.

<sup>d</sup> 33<sup>23</sup> Not necessarily an angel. Probably Elihu refers to himself as the wise interpreter and mediator between God and Job.

<sup>e</sup> 33<sup>23</sup> Or *his righteousness*; i. e., God's.

<sup>f</sup> 33<sup>24</sup> Adding *for his life*, which has apparently fallen out. The ransom that saves the man is his recognition that his affliction is sent for his chastisement.

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

His  
song of  
thanks-  
giving

These  
are  
God's  
ways

And looks on his face with joy,  
For he restores to the man his integrity,  
<sup>27</sup>And he sings before men this song:  
'I have sinned and perverted the right,  
But God has not requited my sin.'<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>He has redeemed my soul from the pit,  
That alive I should behold the light.'<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>29</sup>See, all these things God does  
Twice, yes thrice, with a man,  
<sup>30</sup>To bring back his soul from the pit,  
To flood him with the light of life.  
<sup>31</sup>Mark well, O Job, and hear me:  
Be still, and I will speak.<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>32</sup>If aught you can say, answer me;  
Speak, for I wish to clear you.  
<sup>33</sup>But if not, then you listen to me:  
Be silent, while I teach you wisdom.

### § 23. The Justice of the Omnipotent God, Job 34

It is  
folly for  
Job to  
assert  
that  
he is  
innocent

#### Job 34

<sup>1</sup>Moreover Elihu said,<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>Hear my words, you wise men,  
And give ear to me, you who have knowledge.  
<sup>3</sup>For the ear is the tester of words,  
As the palate is the taster of food.  
<sup>4</sup>Let us choose for us what is right,  
Determine by ourselves what is good.  
<sup>5</sup>For Job has said, 'I am right,  
And God has deprived me of justice;<sup>k</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>Though right, I am counted a liar;  
Though sinless, my wound<sup>l</sup> is incurable.'  
<sup>7</sup>What man is there like Job,  
Who drinks up scoffing like water,<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>Who goes in company with evil-doers,  
And walks with wicked men?<sup>n</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>For he says, 'A man has no profit  
From winning the favor of God.'<sup>o</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 33<sup>27</sup> *I. e.*, through God's forgiveness I was not punished as I deserve.

<sup>b</sup> 33<sup>28</sup> *I. e.*, I shall continue to live in the light. These last two vss. contain the germ of a psalm. Duhm has even suggested that the author of the Elihu speeches also wrote temple songs.

<sup>i</sup> 33<sup>31</sup> *I. e.*, if you make no reply, I will continue speaking.

§ 23 Elihu in this chap. turns to Job's friends and apparently addresses the larger class of wise men whom they represent. Like the friends, he figures as the champion of God and seeks by arguments that are not always logical to defend his justice. Like Job in his quieter moods, Elihu feels convinced that justice and love alone explain human life and all the blessings that man enjoys from the hand of his Creator. For Job, however, Elihu has only stern denunciation for his presuming to dictate to the Almighty.

<sup>j</sup> 34<sup>1</sup> These introductions may be later additions.

<sup>k</sup> 34<sup>5</sup> Cf. 1<sup>3</sup>, 27<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>l</sup> 34<sup>6</sup> Heb., *arrow*; *i. e.*, wound made by an arrow.

<sup>m</sup> 34<sup>7</sup> *I. e.*, greedily.

<sup>n</sup> 34<sup>8</sup> Of course this charge is not based on facts, but is gratuitous.

<sup>o</sup> 34<sup>9</sup> Cf. 21<sup>15</sup>.

# ELIHU

- <sup>10</sup>So hear me, you men of insight!  
Far be it from God to do wrong,  
And from the Almighty to err,  
<sup>11</sup>For the work of a man he requites  
And rewards a man's every act.  
<sup>12</sup>Surely God will not act wickedly;  
The Almighty will not pervert justice.  
<sup>13</sup>Who placed the earth in his charge?  
Who keeps guard<sup>p</sup> over the universe?  
<sup>14</sup>If he should recall his spirit<sup>q</sup>  
And gather his breath to himself,  
<sup>15</sup>All flesh would perish together,  
And man would return to dust.

The om-  
nipotent  
surely  
is just

- <sup>16</sup>If you have insight, hear this;  
Hearken to the sound of my words:  
<sup>17</sup>Could one hating justice govern?  
Will you condemn the Just and Mighty One,  
<sup>18</sup>Who says<sup>r</sup> to a king, 'You villain!'  
To nobles, 'You wicked rascals!'  
<sup>19</sup>Who shows no favor to princes  
And regards not rich more than poor,  
For they are all the work of his hands?  
<sup>20</sup>In a moment they die—at midnight;  
The rich<sup>s</sup> are shaken and pass away,  
And the mighty are removed mysteriously.<sup>t</sup>

Injustice  
inconsis-  
tent with  
sovereign  
power

- <sup>21</sup>For his eyes are over man's acts;  
Each one of his deeds he sees.  
<sup>22</sup>There is no darkness nor gloom  
Where the workers of iniquity may hide.  
<sup>23</sup>For he appoints no set time for a man<sup>u</sup>  
To go before God in judgment.  
<sup>24</sup>He breaks in pieces mighty men without investigating  
And sets others in their place.  
<sup>26</sup>They are crushed<sup>v</sup> as a result of their wickedness;  
He strikes them in the sight of others,<sup>w</sup>

In his  
omnis-  
cience he  
quickly  
crushes  
the  
wicked

<sup>p</sup> 34<sup>13</sup> Revising the Heb., as required by the sense.

<sup>q</sup> 34<sup>14</sup> The variant readings show that this obscure *vs.* is corrupt. In the light of <sup>15</sup> it is possible with the aid of the VSS., which omit Heb., *his heart*, to restore as above.

<sup>r</sup> 34<sup>18</sup> Restoring with the aid of the VSS. The idea is that God is so much more righteous than any human ruler that he can properly call them vile.

<sup>s</sup> 34<sup>20</sup> Restoring the text, which reads *people*, so as to conform to <sup>19</sup>. A scribe has left out the first part of the word, thinking that it was a repetition of the last two letters of the preceding word.

<sup>t</sup> 34<sup>20</sup> Lit., *without a hand*.

<sup>u</sup> 34<sup>23</sup> With Wright restoring the Heb. as the context demands, cf. <sup>24</sup>.

<sup>v</sup> 34<sup>26</sup> *Vs.* <sup>26</sup> is clearly a gloss, for it repeats the ideas in <sup>20-21</sup>. It reads:

*Therefore he notes their works  
And overturns by night, and they are crushed.*

The final verb is best taken with <sup>26</sup>, the metre and logic of which require it, as above.

<sup>w</sup> 34<sup>26</sup> Lit., *in the place of beholders*.



## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

- <sup>27</sup>Because they turned aside from following him  
And did not regard any of his ways,  
<sup>28</sup>So that<sup>x</sup> they caused the cry of the poor to come to him,  
And he heard the cry of the afflicted.  
<sup>29</sup>When he is quiet,<sup>y</sup> who then can condemn?  
And when he hides his face, who can behold him?  
Whether a nation or a man, it is the same,  
<sup>30</sup>That the godless man may not reign,  
That he may not ensnare the people.  
  
<sup>31</sup>Whenever any man says,  
‘I have borne chastisement, I will not offend again;  
<sup>32</sup>What I cannot see do thou teach me;  
If I have done wrong, I will do it no more;’  
<sup>33</sup>Shall he recompense him as you wish?<sup>z</sup> But you refuse it?<sup>a</sup>  
For you must choose, and not I:  
Therefore speak what you know.  
<sup>34</sup>Men of understanding will say to me,  
Every wise man who hears me,  
<sup>35</sup>Job speaks without any knowledge,  
And his words are devoid of wisdom.’  
<sup>36</sup>But now, Job, learn your lesson;  
Do not still reply like the witless.<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>37</sup>For<sup>c</sup> he adds rebellion to his sin;  
He claps his hands among us  
And multiplies his words against God.

### § 24. The Impassivity of God, Job 35

- Job 35** <sup>1</sup>Moreover Elihu said,  
<sup>2</sup>Do you think that it<sup>d</sup> is right  
(You say, ‘I am more righteous than God’)<sup>e</sup>

Folly for  
finite  
man to  
criticise  
divine  
justice

Human  
righteous-  
ness  
profits  
only the  
one who  
does  
right; it  
does not  
affect  
God

<sup>x</sup> 34<sup>28-33</sup> These lines are omitted in the earlier Gk. VSS. and the Sah. and may be secondary. The evidence, however, is not conclusive.

<sup>y</sup> 34<sup>29</sup> So Syr. and Aram. and one Heb. MS.

<sup>z</sup> 34<sup>33</sup> The text and the meaning of this long sentence are somewhat obscure. The translators of the VSS. evidently had difficulty with it. The application clearly is to Job, and the question is whether or not a man should be allowed to dictate to God the manner of his trial and punishment.

<sup>a</sup> 34<sup>33</sup> The obscurity of this line is probably due to the loss of a word or two.

<sup>b</sup> 34<sup>36</sup> Following the Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth. If this reading is original, it means that Elihu has done his duty of Job. Job must, therefore, bear the consequences of his sins. Heb.:

*Would that Job were tried to the end,  
Because of his answering like wicked men.*

If this is original, it may be taken as a continuation of what the wise men say.

<sup>c</sup> 34<sup>37</sup> Following Heb. Gk. is again quite different. If <sup>38</sup> be read as above, Elihu now turns from Job to the friends; if Heb. is original in both vss., the alleged words of the wise men probably include both <sup>38</sup> and <sup>37</sup>.

§ 24 This section well illustrates the impossible extremes to which a dogmatist will resort in order to establish his thesis. Probably without knowing it, the author here makes Elihu deny all that Hosea and Israel's greatest prophets had said regarding God's deep concern regarding the character and acts of each of his children. Here we are introduced to the distant, cold, impassive Deity of theological speculation.

<sup>d</sup> 35<sup>2</sup> Heb. *this*, but pointing forward to vs. <sup>3</sup>. These vss. are rather freely rendered, so as to bring out what seems to be the connection between them.

<sup>e</sup> 35<sup>2</sup> So Gk., Syr., Targ., Lat., and slightly revised (or freely rendered) Heb.

## ELIHU

- <sup>3</sup>To ask<sup>1</sup> what advantage you will have?  
 ('What shall I gain by not sinning?')  
<sup>4</sup>I myself will answer you  
 And your<sup>e</sup> companions with you.  
<sup>5</sup>Look at the heavens and see;  
 Observe the skies, high above you.  
<sup>6</sup>If you have sinned, how does that affect him?  
 If many your transgressions, what do you to him?<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>If you are righteous, what do you give him?  
 Or what does he receive from your hand?  
<sup>8</sup>Your wickedness may hurt a man like yourself,  
 And your righteousness help a mere mortal.<sup>i</sup>

He heeds  
not an  
empty  
cry

- <sup>9</sup>Men cry out against many oppressors,<sup>j</sup>  
 Cry for help against the arm of the mighty,  
<sup>10</sup>But they<sup>k</sup> do not say, 'Where is God our<sup>k</sup> Maker,  
 Giver of songs in the night,  
<sup>11</sup>Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth  
 And makes us wiser than the birds of the heavens?'  
<sup>12</sup>There they cry, but he does not answer,  
 Because of the pride of evil men.  
<sup>13</sup>Surely God will not hear an empty cry,  
 Neither will the Almighty regard it.  
<sup>14</sup>How much less when you say you do not see him;  
 The cause is before him, and you wait for him!  
<sup>15</sup>But now, because he has not visited in his anger,  
 And does not greatly regard arrogance,  
<sup>16</sup>Therefore Job opens his mouth in vanity;  
 He multiplies words without knowledge.

### § 25. The Justice of God's Rule Revealed Both in Human History and in the Natural World, Job 36-37

- Job 36** <sup>1</sup>Elihu said further,  
<sup>2</sup>Wait for me a little, and I will show you;  
 For I have yet words to say on God's behalf.<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>I will bring my knowledge from afar<sup>m</sup>

Justifica-  
tion of  
God: his  
righteous  
rulership

<sup>1</sup> 35<sup>3</sup> Lit., *That you say*.

<sup>e</sup> 35<sup>4</sup> Gk., Sah., and Eth. add *three*. As a matter of fact Elihu goes on to reiterate the claims of Job's friends, but this fact does not prevent him from condemning them in general.

<sup>h</sup> 35<sup>5</sup> Cf. 22<sup>2-3</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> 35<sup>8</sup> Lit., *a son of man*.

<sup>j</sup> 35<sup>9</sup> So Theod., Sym., Syr., Lat., and Targ. Heb., *oppressions*.

<sup>k</sup> 35<sup>10</sup> So Syr. and Aram. Heb. *he, my*.

§ 25 This section contains a *résumé* of Elihu's teachings. The disciplinary meaning of suffering presented in 33 is expanded, and in 37 the author anticipates the still nobler description of Jehovah's majesty and wisdom found in 38-40. The figure of God as the divine Teacher, 36<sup>12</sup>, is well developed, and the description of his might in 37 attains to lofty heights. A large number of vss. in 36-37 are omitted in the Gk. Nichols and Barton hold that 36<sup>28</sup>, 27<sup>b</sup>, 28<sup>a</sup>, 29-32, 37<sup>2-5a</sup>, 11, 12<sup>a,b</sup>, 13 were originally an independent poem describing a storm, but the evidence is not conclusive.

<sup>1</sup> 36<sup>2</sup> Lit., *yet words for God*.

<sup>m</sup> 36<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, will draw my illustrations from all the universe.

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

And ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

<sup>4</sup>For truly my words are not false;  
One perfect in knowledge is with you.

<sup>5</sup>See, God is mighty in strength,  
He despises not the pure in heart.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup>He preserves not the life of the wicked,  
But gives justice to the afflicted.

<sup>7</sup>He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous,  
But he is with kings on the throne:  
He seats them forever, and they are exalted.

<sup>8</sup>And if they are bound in fetters  
And taken in the cords of affliction,

<sup>9</sup>Then he shows them their work  
And their transgressions, how they have behaved proudly.

<sup>10</sup>He opens their ears to instruction  
And commands that they turn from iniquity.

<sup>11</sup>If they give heed and serve him,  
They complete their days in prosperity  
And their years in pleasantness.

<sup>12</sup>If they do not hearken, they perish,<sup>b</sup>  
And they expire without knowledge.

<sup>13</sup>For the godless in heart lay up anger;  
They cry not for help when he binds them.

<sup>14</sup>They die<sup>c</sup> when they are still young,  
And their life ends among the depraved.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The sufferer God saves through his suffering,  
And opens his ear by adversity.

<sup>16</sup>He would have led<sup>e</sup> you out of distress,  
To a broad place, where there is no constraint,  
And where your table would be full of fatness.

<sup>17</sup>But instead the full fate of the wicked is yours,  
Judgment and justice hold you captive.

<sup>18</sup>Beware<sup>f</sup> of wrath lest you be led away by your sufficiency,<sup>g</sup>  
Neither let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside.

<sup>19</sup>Will your cry deliver you from distress,<sup>h</sup>

He sends  
afflictions  
to teach  
and  
discipline  
men

<sup>a</sup> 36<sup>5</sup> Following the reconstruction suggested by Nichols; the Heb. is obviously corrupt. Duhm combines the two lines and revises to read, *Behold, God despises the stubborn in heart.*

<sup>b</sup> 36<sup>12</sup> Heb. adds by a *missile*, but this makes the line too long and is probably due to a scribal error. Syr., in *Abaddon*. Possibly the original read, in *Sheol*. Cf. 33<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> 36<sup>14</sup> Lit., *their physical life dies*.

<sup>d</sup> 36<sup>14</sup> Heb., *holy*; i. e., those consecrated to licentiousness as were many devotees of the ancient Baal cults. Dt. 23<sup>17-18</sup> and many other O.T. passages refer to these temple prostitutes (of both sexes).

<sup>e</sup> 36<sup>16</sup> So VSS. Heb., *allured*. This vs. is not found in the early Gk. and Sah. VSS., and may be the work of a later scribe. The Heb. is obscure at best.

<sup>f</sup> 36<sup>18</sup> So VSS. Heb. adds, *because*.

<sup>g</sup> 36<sup>18</sup> Slightly revising the Heb. The meaning is, in the time of severe affliction do not let your anger and resentment destroy its disciplining effects.

<sup>h</sup> 36<sup>19</sup> Following the guidance of the VSS. in revising the Heb.

# ELIHU

Or all the resources of your might?<sup>v</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Take heed, regard not iniquity;

For this<sup>w</sup> you have chosen rather than affliction.

<sup>22</sup>See, God acts loftily in his power.

Who is a teacher like him?

<sup>23</sup>Who has assigned him his way?

Who can say, 'Thou hast wrought unrighteousness'?

<sup>24</sup>Remember to magnify his work,

Concerning which men have sung.

<sup>25</sup>All men have looked upon it;

Man sees it from afar.

<sup>26</sup>See, God is greater than we know;<sup>x</sup>

The number of his years is unsearchable.

<sup>27</sup>For he draws up<sup>y</sup> the drops of water,<sup>a</sup>

Which distil in rain from his vapor,<sup>a</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Which the skies pour down

And drop upon multitudes of men.

<sup>29</sup>And who<sup>b</sup> can understand the spreading of the clouds,

The thunderings of his pavilion?

<sup>30</sup>See, he spreads his light around him

And covers the tops<sup>c</sup> of the mountains.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>31</sup>For by these he fills<sup>e</sup> the peoples,

Giving food in abundance.

<sup>32</sup>He covers his hands with the lightning,

And commands it to strike the mark.

<sup>33</sup>Its noise tells concerning him,

The cattle also concerning the coming storm.<sup>f</sup>

**37** <sup>1</sup>Yes, at this my heart trembles

And is moved out of its place.

<sup>2</sup>Hark to the roar of his voice,

And the sound that goes forth from his mouth.

<sup>3</sup>He sends it throughout the heavens,

To the ends of the earth his lightning.

<sup>4</sup>In the wake of it roars his<sup>g</sup> voice,

With a voice majestic he thunders,

And he does not restrain his lightnings,

His  
might  
shown  
in the  
storm  
and other  
phenom-  
ena of  
nature

<sup>v</sup> 36<sup>19</sup> Vs. 20 is omitted in the early Gk. and Sah. texts; it is hopelessly corrupt and probably secondary.

<sup>w</sup> 36<sup>20</sup> Slightly revising the Heb.

<sup>x</sup> 36<sup>20</sup> Lit., *great and we do not know*.

<sup>y</sup> 36<sup>27</sup> Or *restrains*.

<sup>a</sup> 36<sup>27</sup> Or *emending, drops from the sea*.

<sup>a</sup> 36<sup>27</sup> Lat., *which he pours out as rain*.

<sup>b</sup> 36<sup>29</sup> So Syr. and Ar.

<sup>c</sup> 36<sup>30</sup> Emending the text slightly.

<sup>d</sup> 36<sup>30</sup> Again making an emendation which the text demands.

<sup>e</sup> 36<sup>31</sup> Changing the Heb. slightly. The trad. text reads *judges*.

<sup>f</sup> 36<sup>33</sup> The Heb. is clearly corrupt. The rendering is based on a slight emendation of each word.

<sup>g</sup> 37<sup>4</sup> So two Heb. MSS.

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

Whenever his voice is heard.

<sup>5</sup>Great things<sup>b</sup> he does which we cannot comprehend,

<sup>6</sup>For he commands the snow,

'Fall upon the earth,'

Also the rain and mighty storms.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>7</sup>On every man<sup>j</sup> he sets a seal,

That all men may know his work.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Then the beasts go into coverts,

And remain in their dens.

<sup>9</sup>Out of the chamber comes the storm,

And cold out of the stormy north.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>10</sup>By the breath of God ice is given;

And the breadth of the waters is congealed.

<sup>11</sup>He also loads the thick cloud with moisture;<sup>m</sup>

He spreads abroad the cloud of his light.

<sup>12</sup>And it is turned round about by his guidance,

That it<sup>n</sup> may do whatever he commands it<sup>n</sup>

Upon the face of the habitable world,

<sup>13</sup>Whether it is for judgment<sup>o</sup> on his land

Or for mercy that he makes it come.

<sup>14</sup>Listen to this, O Job;

Stand still and consider God's wonders.

<sup>15</sup>Do you know how God orders his works<sup>p</sup>

And makes the light of his cloud shine?

<sup>16</sup>Do you know the balancings of the clouds,

The wonders of the Perfect in Knowledge;—

<sup>17</sup>You whose garments are warm

When the earth is still because of the south wind?

<sup>18</sup>Can you with him spread out the sky,

Which is strong as a molten mirror?

<sup>19</sup>Teach us what we shall say to him;

We cannot think clearly<sup>q</sup> because of darkness.

<sup>20</sup>Shall it be told him that I would speak?

If a man should speak he would be swallowed up.

<sup>21</sup>As it is men cannot look at the light,

Bright shining<sup>r</sup> in the skies

Direct  
applica-  
tion to  
Job's  
case

<sup>b</sup> 37<sup>5</sup> Heb. inserts at the beginning of the vs., echoing the idea of 4, *God thunders marvelously with his voice.*

<sup>i</sup> 37<sup>6</sup> A scribe has repetitiously expanded the Heb. The above rendering is that of the Syr. Others would revise to read, *To the showers of rain, 'Be mighty.'*

<sup>j</sup> 37<sup>7</sup> Again slightly revising the doubtful Heb.

<sup>k</sup> 37<sup>7</sup> Following a slightly different reading of the Heb.

<sup>l</sup> 37<sup>9</sup> Lit., *the scatterers*. The reference is probably to a group of stars on the northern horizon which was popularly believed to be the bringer of cold.

<sup>m</sup> 37<sup>11</sup> Or, slightly revising the Heb., *hail*.

<sup>n</sup> 37<sup>12</sup> Heb., *they, them*, but the context requires the singular.

<sup>o</sup> 37<sup>13</sup> Lit., *a rod*. Heb. inserts another *or*, probably due to scribal repetition.

<sup>p</sup> 37<sup>15</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *enjoins them*.

<sup>q</sup> 37<sup>19</sup> Lit., *set in order* (sc. our words or thoughts), as in 33<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> 37<sup>21</sup> The word rendered *Bright shining* is of uncertain meaning.



Where the wind passes and clears them.  
<sup>22</sup>Out of the north comes brightness;  
 About God is terrible majesty.  
<sup>23</sup>The Almighty,—we cannot find him;  
 He abounds in power and justice;  
 The thoroughly righteous he harms not.\*  
<sup>24</sup>Therefore mortals fear him;  
 He regards no wise-minded man.

§ 26. A Later Wise Man: The Divine Wisdom That Rules the Universe Is  
 Incomprehensible, Job 28

**Job 28** <sup>1</sup>There is a mine for silver,  
 And a place where gold is refined.  
<sup>2</sup>Iron is taken from ore,  
 And copper is melted from rock.  
<sup>3</sup>Man puts an end to darkness,<sup>†</sup>  
 And explores to the furthest bound  
 The stones that are buried in darkness.  
<sup>4</sup>He breaks a shaft through the dust;  
 With no foothold, forgotten, they hang,  
 Afar from men<sup>‡</sup> they swing.<sup>‡</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>From the face of the earth comes bread,  
 But beneath it is melted<sup>¶</sup> by fire.  
<sup>6</sup>Its stones abound in sapphires,  
 And its dust yields grains of gold.  
<sup>7</sup>Man<sup>×</sup> lays his hand on the rock,  
 By their roots he overturns mountains.  
<sup>10</sup>He cuts channels through the rocks,  
 And his eye sees each precious thing.

Man is  
 able to  
 find and  
 make his  
 own all  
 the  
 treasures  
 of the  
 earth

\* 37<sup>22</sup> So Syr. The text and meaning of the Heb. are uncertain.

§ 26 The editor who added this powerful poem to the Book of Job evidently felt that it was a definite contribution to the discussion of the divine rulership of the world. He accordingly inserted it at the close of the last cycle of speeches. Job in 29-31 entirely ignores it, and it is in fact nowhere referred to in the lyric drama. Its calm philosophical atmosphere is alien to the tense, heated discussions that precede and follow. The author of the poem has expanded the argument of Zophar in 11<sup>7</sup>:

*Can you find out the deep things of God?  
 Can you reach the perfection of the Almighty?*

Zophar also discouraged the pursuit of divine wisdom, 11<sup>8-9</sup>. Job, however, in the lyric drama boldly fares forth to determine the purpose that lies back of the universe and challenges its justice. The poem in 28 was, therefore, inserted as a dignified rebuke to Job's presumption. The aim of the poem itself is constructive. While its conclusion is agnostic, it is a reverent agnosticism. The writer, like the author of the lyric drama, is ready to trust in the goodness and wisdom of the divine plan even though he cannot apprehend it, and he writes in order to inspire others with the same calm faith. Wisdom as here defined is so closely akin to what the Greek philosophers called Reason, or the plan which lies back of nature and the world of things, that it is probable that the poem was not written earlier than the third century B.C., when Hellenic thought was flooding southwestern Asia. Like the *Wisdom of Solomon*, it is one of the few pre-Christian writings in which Greek and Hebrew thoughts mingle.

<sup>†</sup> 28<sup>3</sup> *I. e.*, by boring into the earth.

<sup>‡</sup> 28<sup>4</sup> So Gk., Aquila, Sym., and Eth. Heb., *Away from where men sojourn.*

<sup>¶</sup> 28<sup>5</sup> *I. e.*, as they go down into the mine.

<sup>×</sup> 28<sup>7</sup> *Lit., turned.*

<sup>×</sup> 28<sup>9</sup> Transposing 7-8 to their logical position in the chap.

## REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

<sup>11</sup>He keeps the streams from trickling,  
And brings to light what is hid.

<sup>12</sup>But where can wisdom be found?  
And where is the home of understanding?

<sup>13</sup>The way<sup>y</sup> to it no man knows,  
It is not found in the land of the living.

<sup>7</sup>That path<sup>z</sup> no bird of prey knows,  
Nor has the eye of the falcon seen it.

<sup>8</sup>The proud beasts have not trodden it,  
Nor has the fierce lion passed by it.

<sup>14</sup>The deep<sup>a</sup> says, 'It is not in me';  
The sea says, 'It is not with me.'

<sup>15</sup>It cannot be purchased with gold,  
Nor will silver be taken in payment.

<sup>16</sup>Not in Ophir gold can one value it,  
Nor in precious onyx or sapphire.

<sup>17</sup>Gold and glass cannot equal it,  
Jewels of gold are no exchange for it.

<sup>18</sup>Crystal and coral are no match for it;<sup>b</sup>  
More precious than rubies is Wisdom.

<sup>19</sup>The topaz of Ethiopia is not equal to it,  
Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

<sup>20</sup>But Wisdom—from whence does it come?  
Understanding—where is its home?

<sup>21</sup>It is hid from the eyes of all living,  
Concealed from the birds of the air.

<sup>22</sup>Destruction<sup>c</sup> and Death declare:  
'We have heard but a rumor about it.'

<sup>23</sup>God perceives<sup>d</sup> the way to it,  
And he alone knows its home;

<sup>24</sup>For he looks to the ends of the earth,  
Seeing everything under the heavens,<sup>e</sup>

<sup>25</sup>He who fixed the force<sup>f</sup> of the wind,  
And by measure allotted the waters.

<sup>26</sup>When he made a law for the rain,  
And a path for the thunder-bolts,<sup>g</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Then he saw Wisdom and measured it,

<sup>y</sup> 28<sup>12</sup> So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *price*; but cf. 20, 23.

<sup>a</sup> 28<sup>7-8</sup> These vss. logically follow 12. This is the order assumed in 21. Vs. 9 is also the logical sequel of 8.

<sup>z</sup> 28<sup>14-19</sup> These vss. are lacking in the Gk. and Sah. texts. Vs. 20 follows logically after 12, so that it is possible that 14-19 were not found in the original version of the poem.

<sup>b</sup> 28<sup>18</sup> Lit., *will not be remembered*.

<sup>c</sup> 28<sup>22</sup> Lit., *Abaddon*, the place where the wicked are punished.

<sup>d</sup> 28<sup>23</sup> Gk., Sah., Eth., and five Heb. MSS. read, *establishes*.

<sup>e</sup> 28<sup>24</sup> So Lat. and Ar. Heb., *Seeing under the whole heavens*.

<sup>f</sup> 28<sup>25</sup> Lit., *made a weight*. So VSS. Heb., *To make, etc.*

<sup>g</sup> 28<sup>26</sup> Taken from 38<sup>26</sup>.

But no  
man can  
find  
wisdom  
or make  
it his  
own

God  
alone has  
possessed  
it from  
the  
creation

## A LATER WISE MAN

He perfected and tested it.  
<sup>28</sup>And to man he said, 'Behold!  
 To revere the Lord is wisdom,  
 To avoid evil, understanding.'<sup>h</sup>

### THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

§ 27. The Lord: Finite Man Cannot Grasp and Therefore Cannot Justly  
 Criticise the Infinite Plan of the Universe, Job 38-42<sup>g</sup>

**Job 38** <sup>1</sup>Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind:

<sup>2</sup>Who is this that obscures my plan

By words devoid of knowledge?

<sup>3</sup>Now gird up your loins like a warrior;<sup>a</sup>

Let me ask, and you answer me!

<sup>4</sup>Where were you when I founded the earth?

You have knowledge and insight,<sup>b</sup> so tell me.

<sup>5</sup>You must know!<sup>c</sup> Who determined its measures?

Or who measured it off with a line?

<sup>6</sup>On what were its pedestals<sup>d</sup> placed?

Or who laid its corner-stone,

<sup>7</sup>When the morning stars all sang together,

And the sons of God shouted for joy?<sup>e</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Who shut up the sea with doors,

When it broke forth fresh from the womb;

<sup>9</sup>When I made the clouds its garments,

And thick mists its swaddling-band,<sup>f</sup>

<sup>10</sup>When I appointed its boundaries,

And set up its barriers and doors,<sup>g</sup>

God's  
character  
as re-  
vealed  
in the  
mighty  
works of  
creation  
con-  
trasted  
with  
that of  
finite  
man

As ruler  
of nature

<sup>h</sup> 28<sup>28</sup> Possibly this vs. is the addition of a later scribe who felt that a moral was needed to conclude the chapter.

§ 27 As has been noted in the Introd., p. 33, 38 ff. is the original sequel to 31. Here Job's intense desire is justified, and God himself speaks to him face to face, not to answer Job's individual questions, but to reveal to his startled eyes the infinite wisdom and majesty of him who rules the universe. The long and labored description of the behemoth or hippopotamus and the leviathan or crocodile in 40<sup>13</sup>-41<sup>34</sup> is generally agreed by scholars to be a later addition to the drama. The author of this section had evidently been so impressed by the size and irresistible might of these huge beasts, which he regarded as the chief of God's works (40<sup>13</sup>, 41<sup>34</sup>), that he felt impelled to describe them. Logically the description belongs after 39<sup>30</sup>. By means of these powerful pictures of God, as revealed in the creation and rulership of the world, the author makes clear how impossible it is for man with all his limitations to fathom the mysteries of the universe and therefore to pass just judgment upon his providences. At the same time these speeches reveal the infinite wisdom and suggest the benign plan that lie back of the universe.

<sup>a</sup> 38<sup>3</sup> Or *hero*. So Syr., Targ., and one Heb. MS. Trad. Heb., *a man*.

<sup>b</sup> 38<sup>4</sup> Lit., *know understanding*; i. e., know as the result of clear insight.

<sup>c</sup> 38<sup>5</sup> These words are, of course, ironical.

<sup>d</sup> 38<sup>6</sup> Lit., *sockets*, in which the pillars that hold up the earth are set.

<sup>e</sup> 38<sup>7</sup> In celebrating the laying of the corner-stone as did the old Babylonians and Hebrews in connection with the building of their temples, cf. Zech. 4<sup>1</sup>. The figure of stars and angels is evidently taken from the Bab. account of creation.

<sup>f</sup> 38<sup>9</sup> The likening of the new-born earth to a new-born babe is quite in keeping with the matchless art of the poet.

<sup>g</sup> 38<sup>10</sup> Here again the poet draws his figures from the old Bab. account of Marduk's conquest of Chaos:

*One half of her he established,  
 He roofed over the heavens,  
 A bolt he fixed,  
 A watchman he set,  
 Not to let out his waters he commanded.*

# THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

<sup>11</sup>Saying, 'Thus far, but no farther;  
Here shall your proud waves cease' ?<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>Have you ever commanded the morning,  
Or shown the dawn its place,  
<sup>13</sup>To take hold of the skirts of the earth,<sup>i</sup>  
That the wicked might be shaken out of it ?  
<sup>14</sup>It is changed as clay under the seal,  
And the world stands forth<sup>j</sup> as a garment;  
<sup>15</sup>The wicked are shorn of their light,<sup>k</sup>  
And the upraised arm is broken.

<sup>16</sup>Have you entered the springs of the sea,  
Or walked in the depths of the ocean ?  
<sup>17</sup>Have the gates of death been unveiled to you ?  
Have you seen the guardians<sup>l</sup> of Hades ?  
<sup>18</sup>Have you grasped the breadth of the earth ?  
If you know all this,<sup>m</sup> declare it.  
<sup>19</sup>Where is the dwelling of light,  
And where the abode of darkness ?  
<sup>20</sup>Can you take it to its border,  
And lead it back<sup>n</sup> to its home ?  
<sup>21</sup>You know, for you were born then,  
And your years are so great in number !

<sup>22</sup>Have you entered the storehouse of snow,  
Have you looked on the guardian<sup>o</sup> of hail,  
<sup>23</sup>Which I have kept for the time of distress,  
For the day of assault and battle ?  
<sup>24</sup>In what way are the clouds<sup>p</sup> divided  
That scatter the showers<sup>q</sup> on earth ?  
<sup>25</sup>Who has cleft for the torrents<sup>r</sup> a channel,  
Or a path for the flash of the lightning,<sup>s</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>Sending rain on a desolate land,  
On the uninhabited wilderness,  
<sup>27</sup>To slake waste and desolation,  
To clothe the dry land<sup>t</sup> with verdure ?

<sup>h</sup> 33<sup>11</sup> Slightly correcting the Heb. Gk., Sah., and Eth., *the pride of the waves be broken*.

<sup>i</sup> 33<sup>13</sup> *I. e.*, draw off the coverlet of darkness, revealing the wicked and their deeds.

<sup>j</sup> 33<sup>14</sup> *I. e.*, the light of dawn makes objects on the earth stand out as though stamped into a seal.

<sup>k</sup> 33<sup>15</sup> *I. e.*, by the appearance of the light of day.

<sup>l</sup> 33<sup>17</sup> So Gk. Heb. repeats *gates*. Gk. instead of *have you seen* has *have frightened you*.

<sup>m</sup> 33<sup>18</sup> So Heb. Gk., *how great it is*.

<sup>n</sup> 33<sup>20</sup> Following Hoffmann in correcting the text as demanded by the context. Heb., *discern the paths*.

<sup>o</sup> 33<sup>22</sup> With Duhm punctuating the Heb. so as to avoid the repetition of the word *treasuries*.

<sup>p</sup> 33<sup>24</sup> Through the influence of <sup>19</sup> the Heb. has *light* for the very similar word *cloud*, which is required by the context.

<sup>q</sup> 33<sup>24</sup> With Duhm slightly correcting the Heb., which reads *east wind*. Gk., *thick smoke*.

<sup>r</sup> 33<sup>25</sup> Thought of as coming through an opening in the vault of heaven.

<sup>s</sup> 33<sup>25</sup> Lit., *lightning of the thunder*.

<sup>t</sup> 33<sup>27</sup> With Wright transforming two Heb. consonants.

## THE LORD

- <sup>28</sup>Has the rain a father?  
Who gave birth to the dew-drops?
- <sup>29</sup>Out of whose womb came the ice?  
And who gave birth to the hoar-frost,
- <sup>30</sup>So the waters are frozen like stone,  
And the face of the deep is hidden?<sup>u</sup>
- <sup>31</sup>Can you bind the group of the Pleiades,<sup>v</sup>  
Or loose the bands of Orion?
- <sup>32</sup>Can you lead forth the stars<sup>w</sup> in their season,  
Or guide the Bear with her young?<sup>x</sup>
- <sup>33</sup>Do you know the laws of the heavens?<sup>y</sup>  
Can you set up their rule on the earth?
- <sup>34</sup>Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,  
That abundance of water may answer<sup>z</sup> you?
- <sup>35</sup>Can you send on their missions the lightnings;  
To you do they say, 'Here we are'?
- <sup>36</sup>Who has put in the dark clouds<sup>a</sup> their wisdom,  
Or given the cloud-rack<sup>b</sup> perception?
- <sup>37</sup>Who spreads out<sup>c</sup> the clouds in wisdom?  
Or who pours out the bottles of heaven,
- <sup>38</sup>When the dust runs into a mass,  
And the clods stick firmly together?<sup>d</sup>
- <sup>39</sup>Can you hunt the prey for the lioness,  
Or fill the mouths of her cubs,
- <sup>40</sup>When they couch in their dens together,  
Or lie in wait in the thicket?
- <sup>41</sup>Who provides at evening<sup>e</sup> her prey,  
When her young ones cry to God,  
And wander in search of<sup>f</sup> food?
- 39** <sup>1</sup>Do you know the birth-times of the goats,<sup>g</sup>  
Or direct the calving of the hinds?  
<sup>2</sup>Do you number the months they fulfil,  
Or know the time of their bearing?

Ice and  
frost

Stars

Clouds

As  
Creator  
and  
Ruler of  
animal  
creatures:  
Lions

Wild  
goats

<sup>u</sup> 38<sup>30</sup> Transposing the verbs in the vs.

<sup>v</sup> 38<sup>31</sup> Or the chain of *Canis Major*. The exact meaning of the Heb. is not clear.

<sup>w</sup> 38<sup>32</sup> Doubtful. Possibly the signs of the zodiac.

<sup>x</sup> 38<sup>32</sup> Popular astrology asserted the influence of the stars upon human events.

<sup>y</sup> 38<sup>33</sup> Or, revising the Heb., *Do you cause the heavens to know laws?* The reference, however, is probably to the popular belief in the influence of the stars on human affairs.

<sup>z</sup> 38<sup>34</sup> So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *cover*.

<sup>a</sup> 38<sup>36</sup> The meaning of the Heb. is uncertain. In Ps. 51<sup>6</sup> it is translated *inward parts*.

<sup>b</sup> 38<sup>36</sup> Again the Heb. is doubtful; possibly it means the northern lights or a comet.

<sup>c</sup> 38<sup>37</sup> Heb., *numbers*. The emendation followed above involves only a slight correction in the Heb. and gives good sense.

<sup>d</sup> 38<sup>38</sup> *I. e.*, the powdered dust becomes a mass of clods as the rain descends upon it.

<sup>e</sup> 38<sup>41</sup> With Wright pointing the Heb. so as to read as above, and not, as currently translated, *for the raven*.

<sup>f</sup> 38<sup>41</sup> So the Gk. Heb., *for the lack of*.

<sup>g</sup> 39<sup>1</sup> Duhm reconstructs the Heb. to read, *Do you teach the wild-goats heat?* Possibly this is the original, for the present line is repeated in <sup>2b</sup>.

## THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

<sup>3</sup>They bow and bring forth their young,  
They are quickly over their birth-pangs.  
<sup>4</sup>Their young grow strong in the open,  
They go forth and return no more.

Wild ass

<sup>5</sup>Who sent out free the wild ass?  
Who loosed the bonds of the swift ass,  
<sup>6</sup>Whose home I have made the wilderness,  
The salt land his dwelling-place?  
<sup>7</sup>He scorns the din of the city,  
He hears not the shouts of the driver;  
<sup>8</sup>He seeks<sup>h</sup> the mountains for his pasture,  
After every green thing he searches.

Wild ox

<sup>9</sup>Will the wild ox be willing to serve you  
Or spend the night by your crib?  
<sup>10</sup>Can you bind his neck<sup>i</sup> with thongs?  
Or will he plow the furrows after you?  
<sup>11</sup>Will you trust him, his strength being great,  
Or leave him to do your work?  
<sup>12</sup>Are you sure that he will return  
And gather your seed on your threshing-floor?<sup>j</sup>

Ostrich

<sup>13</sup>The wings<sup>k</sup> of the ostrich wave proudly,<sup>1</sup>  
But are her pinions and feathers kindly?<sup>m</sup>  
<sup>14</sup>For she leaves her eggs on the earth  
And warms them in the dust,  
<sup>15</sup>And forgets that the foot may crush them,  
Or that the wild beast may trample them.  
<sup>16</sup>She hardens herself against her young as if they were not hers.<sup>n</sup>  
Though her labor is in vain, she has no fears.<sup>o</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>When she lifts herself up high,<sup>p</sup>  
She scorns the horse and his rider.

War-  
horse

<sup>19</sup>Do you give the war horse his might,  
Clothe his neck with the quivering mane?<sup>q</sup>

<sup>h</sup> 39<sup>8</sup> So Theod., Targ., Lat., Eth., and a slightly revised Heb. text.

<sup>i</sup> 39<sup>10</sup> So the VSS. Heb. repeats *wild oxen*.

<sup>j</sup> 39<sup>11</sup> Revising the order of the Heb., as the sense and metre demand.

<sup>k</sup> 39<sup>13-15</sup> These vs. are lacking in the Gk. and may be later additions.

<sup>l</sup> 39<sup>13</sup> Correcting the Heb., as the context requires. Cf. Lam. 4<sup>5</sup>, *Cruel like the ostrich in the wilderness*.

<sup>m</sup> 39<sup>13</sup> Possibly this word is from an Aram. root. A slight change in the reading gives the meaning *lacking*, which may be original, for it fits the context excellently.

<sup>n</sup> 39<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, the ostrich is devoted to its young.

<sup>o</sup> 39<sup>16</sup> Vs. 17 may be secondary, for it speaks of God in the third person and interrupts the logical connection with 15. It is also lacking in the Gk. It reads:

*Because God has deprived her of wisdom,  
Neither has he imparted to her understanding.*

<sup>p</sup> 39<sup>17</sup> A slight change in the Heb. gives the reading, *When the archers come*.

<sup>q</sup> 39<sup>19</sup> The meaning of the word rendered *quivering mane* is not certain.



## THE LORD

- <sup>20</sup>Do you make him leap like a locust?  
 His majestic snorting strikes terror,  
<sup>21</sup>He paws<sup>r</sup> in the valley, rejoicing;  
 In strength he goes forth to the fray,  
<sup>22</sup>He mocks at fear, undismayed,  
 He turns not back from the sword.  
<sup>23</sup>The quiver rattles upon him,  
 The spear and the javelin flash.  
<sup>24</sup>He devours the ground with fierce rage,  
 Halting not at the blast of the trumpet.  
<sup>25</sup>When the bugle sounds, he neighs,  
 As he scents the fray from afar,  
 The din of commands and the battle cry.

<sup>26</sup>Does the hawk soar because of your wisdom,  
 And stretch her wings to the south wind?

Hawk

<sup>27</sup>Does the eagle<sup>s</sup> mount up at your bidding,  
 And build her nest on high?

And eagle

<sup>28</sup>On the cliff she dwells, making her home,  
 On the peak of the cliff and the stronghold.

<sup>29</sup>From there she spies out her prey;  
 From afar her eyes behold it.

<sup>30</sup>Her young ones also suck blood,  
 And where the slain are, there is she.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>r</sup> 39<sup>21</sup> So VSS. Heb., *they paw*.

<sup>s</sup> 39<sup>27</sup> Or *vulture*.

<sup>t</sup> 39<sup>30</sup> Cf. Lk. 17<sup>37</sup>. Here should follow, logically, the secondary passage concerning the hippopotamus (behemoth) and crocodile (leviathan), which appears in Heb. as 40<sup>18-41</sup> (cf. introd. note to this section). With a number of necessary emendations of the Heb. and a rather free rendering in several places it reads:

40<sup>18</sup> See behemoth, which I made with you:  
 Grass he eats like an ox.

<sup>19</sup> See, his might is in his loins  
 And his strength in his belly muscles.

<sup>17</sup> He bends his tail like a cedar;  
 The sinews of his thighs are knit together

<sup>18</sup> His bones are tubes of bronze;  
 His limbs are like bars of iron.

<sup>19</sup> The first of God's ways is he,—  
 Let his Maker bring near his sword!

<sup>20</sup> For the mountains provide for him produce,  
 And the beasts of the field all play there.

<sup>21</sup> Beneath the lotus trees lies he,  
 Concealed by the reeds and the swamp.

<sup>22</sup> For his shade the lotus trees screen him;  
 The poplars of the brook surround him.

<sup>23</sup> Though a river o'erflow, undismayed is he;  
 Calm, though Jordan surge up to his mouth.

<sup>24</sup> In his eyes there is none that can take him  
 Or pierce his nose by a trap.

41 <sup>1</sup> Can you draw out leviathan with a hook  
 And press down his tongue with a line?

<sup>2</sup> Can you put a cord in his nose  
 And pierce his jaw with a hook?

<sup>3</sup> Will he make to you many entreaties  
 And speak to you tender words?

<sup>4</sup> Will he make  $\equiv$  contract with you,  
 That you shall take him for a servant forever?

<sup>5</sup> Will you play with him as with a bird

## THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

40 <sup>2</sup>Will<sup>u</sup> the fault-finder strive with Almighty?  
He who argues with God, let him answer.

Job's  
submis-  
sion

<sup>3</sup>Then Job answered the Lord:

<sup>4</sup>How small I am! What can I answer?

I lay my hand on my mouth.

<sup>5</sup>I spoke once, but will do so no more;

Yes, twice, but will go no further.

*And bind him for your maidens?*

<sup>6</sup> *Will the fishermen's companies trade for him  
And divide him among the merchants?*

<sup>7</sup> *Can you fill his skin with harpoons  
And his head with fishing spears?*

<sup>8</sup> *Lay your hand upon him!*

*Remember the battle; repeat it not!*

<sup>9</sup> *His assailant's hope is false;*

*At the sight of him he is overwhelmed.*

<sup>10</sup> *Is he not cruel? Who will rouse him?*

*And who is he that can stand before him?*

<sup>11</sup> *Who has opposed him successfully?*

*Beneath the whole heavens, who is he?*

<sup>12</sup> *I will not fail to speak of his limbs,*

*Of his might and his strong constitution.*

<sup>13</sup> *Who has stripped off his outer garment?*

*Who can come within his double armor?*

<sup>14</sup> *Who has opened the doors of his face?*

*Round about his teeth is terror.*

<sup>15</sup> *Channels of shields guard his back,*

*Shut up, a seal tightly pressed,*

<sup>16</sup> *One closely joined to the other*

*So that not a breath comes in between them,*

<sup>17</sup> *Each holding fast to its neighbor,*

*Closely united, inseparable.*

<sup>18</sup> *Light flashes forth when he sneezes.*

*Like the eyelids of Dawn are his eyes.*

<sup>19</sup> *Out of his mouth issue torches;*

*Sparks of fire, as it were, escape.*

<sup>20</sup> *From his nostrils comes forth smoke,*

*As from a pot blown upon and boiling.*

<sup>21</sup> *His breath sets coals afire,*

*And a flame comes out of his mouth.*

<sup>22</sup> *In his neck lodges strength.*

*Consternation dances before him.*

<sup>23</sup> *The folds of his flesh hold together;*

*They are solid upon him, immovable.*

<sup>24</sup> *His heart is solid as a rock,*

*Solid as the nether millstone.*

<sup>25</sup> *When he rises, the mighty are horrified,*

*Beside themselves with terror.*

<sup>26</sup> *The sword will not stick though it reach him;*

*No more will the spear, dart, or javelin.*

<sup>27</sup> *Iron he regards as straw*

*And bronze as rotten wood.*

<sup>28</sup> *The arrow cannot put him to flight;*

*For him slingstones are turned into stubble.*

<sup>29</sup> *A club is to him like a reed,*

*And he laughs at the shaking of the javelin.*

<sup>30</sup> *His belly scales are sharp potsherds;*

*He spreads a threshing-drag on the mud.*

<sup>31</sup> *He makes the depths boil like a cauldron;*

*The sea he sets boiling like perfume.*

<sup>32</sup> *Behind him he leaves a bright pathway:*

*One would think that the deep had grown hoary!*

<sup>33</sup> *There is nothing on earth that is like him.*

*Made as he is without fear.*

<sup>34</sup> *All that is high he sees;*

*He is king over all the proud.*

<sup>u</sup> 40<sup>2</sup> Before this vs. Heb. inserts, <sup>1</sup>And Jehovah answered Job and said. This can hardly be original, for vs. <sup>2</sup> is not the beginning but the conclusion of Jehovah's reply.

## THE LORD

<sup>6</sup>Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind:

<sup>7</sup>Now gird up your loins like a warrior;

Let me ask, and you answer me!<sup>v</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Will you set aside my judgment,

And condemn me, that you may be justified?

<sup>9</sup>Or have you an arm like God,

With a voice like his can you thunder?

<sup>10</sup>Deck yourself with pride and dignity,

Clothe yourself with glory and splendor,

<sup>11</sup>Pour forth the floods of your anger,

And abase all those who are proud.

<sup>12</sup>Tread down<sup>w</sup> in their tracks the wicked,

<sup>13</sup>Bury them all in the dust,

Shut them up in the hidden place;

<sup>14</sup>Then will I sing your praise,

Because your right hand can save you!<sup>x</sup>

Final  
words of  
Jehovah  
to Job

42 <sup>1</sup>Then Job answered the Lord:

<sup>2</sup>I know that thou canst do all things,  
And that nothing with thee is impossible.

<sup>3</sup>I spoke, therefore, without sense,  
Of wonders beyond my knowledge.<sup>y</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I had heard of thee but by hearsay,

But now my eye has seen thee;

<sup>5</sup>Therefore I loathe my words,<sup>z</sup>

And repent in dust and ashes.

Job's  
utter  
humilia-  
tion

## EPILOGUE

§ 28. The Reward of Job's Fidelity, Job 42<sup>7-17</sup>

[Then Jehovah answered Job out of the storm: See, you have spoken words of truth and have been found blameless in my sight. There is none like you

<sup>v</sup> 40<sup>7</sup> These two vss. repeat 38<sup>1-2</sup>. In view of this repetition, the insertion of 40<sup>15-41</sup>, the brevity of Job's first reply, and the strangeness of his making two such replies, it may be that 40<sup>8-14</sup> should immediately follow vs. <sup>2</sup>, that vss. <sup>3-5</sup> should precede 42<sup>2</sup>, and that 40<sup>6-7</sup> and 42<sup>1</sup> should be regarded as editorial insertions necessitated by the rearrangement of the material. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the present order and the repetition of 38<sup>1-2</sup> in 40<sup>6-7</sup> are original.

<sup>w</sup> 40<sup>12</sup> Omitting <sup>12a</sup> as a mere repetition of <sup>11b</sup>.

<sup>x</sup> 40<sup>14</sup> For 40<sup>15-41</sup>, see note on 39<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>y</sup> 42<sup>3</sup> Before these two lines Heb. inserts a line (or defective couplet) repeating 38<sup>2</sup> almost verbatim, and between <sup>3</sup> and <sup>5</sup> is inserted vs. <sup>4</sup>, which reads:

*Hear, prithee, and I will speak;  
Let me ask, and you answer me.*

This is obviously based upon 38<sup>2</sup> (= 40<sup>7</sup>). If rightly included among the words of Job, these lines can be explained only as a meditative appropriation and application to himself of what Jehovah has said, or (more fancifully) as momentary interruptions by the last distant rumblings of the thunder-storm in which Jehovah had spoken (cf. R. G. Moulton: *The Modern Reader's Bible*, in loc.). Modern critics are inclined to regard them as glosses.

<sup>z</sup> 42<sup>5</sup> The object of the verb is omitted by the Heb., probably through a scribal error.

§ 28 Evidently in the original prose story, to which this concluding section belongs, Jehovah's words to Job were very different from those found in the lyric poem (38<sup>2</sup>-40<sup>14</sup>). The passage printed above in brackets attempts with the aid of the context to supply these words and thus to restore the general outlines of the original story. By reading 1-2 with the passage in brackets following 2<sup>12</sup>, and continuing immediately with this section, a clear idea of the probable contents of the folk-tale may be obtained.

## EPILOGUE

on the earth, for you are a perfect and upright man who fears me and turns away from evil, and you have remained steadfast in your piety, although without cause you have been sorely afflicted.]

**Job 42** 'Now after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has. <sup>a</sup>Now, therefore, take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept him, in order that I may not deal with you according to your folly, for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has.' <sup>b</sup>So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them. And the Lord accepted Job.

<sup>c</sup>Moreover the Lord made Job great,<sup>a</sup> when he prayed for his friends, and gave him twice as much as he had before. <sup>d</sup>Then his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came and ate and drank<sup>b</sup> with him in his house. And they mourned with him and comforted him for all the misfortunes that the Lord had brought upon him. Each man also gave him a piece of money.<sup>c</sup> <sup>e</sup>So the Lord blessed Job's latter end more than his beginning, and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand female asses. <sup>f</sup>He also had seven sons and three daughters; <sup>g</sup>the first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keran-Happuch.<sup>d</sup> <sup>h</sup>In all the land no women were found so fair as the daughters of Job. And their father gave them an inheritance together with their brothers.<sup>e</sup> <sup>i</sup>After this Job lived a hundred and forty years<sup>f</sup> and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. <sup>j</sup>Then Job died, old and satisfied with living.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 42<sup>10</sup> Heb., *turned the captivity of Job*. This is an idiom that reveals the influence of the exile and was probably later substituted for the reading of the VSS., which has been followed above.

<sup>b</sup> 42<sup>11</sup> So Gk. Heb. adds *bread*, and leaves out *and drank*.

<sup>c</sup> 42<sup>11</sup> Lit., *Kesitah*, cf. Gen. 32<sup>19</sup>. The exact value is not known.

<sup>d</sup> 42<sup>14</sup> *Jemimah* probably means *dove*; *Keziah* means *cassia*; and *Keran-Happuch*, *horn of antimony*—antimony being used by Oriental women to add to their beauty. These names were clearly intended to suggest the surpassing beauty of Job's daughters.

<sup>e</sup> 42<sup>15</sup> Ordinarily daughters inherited property only when there were no sons. Cf. Num. 27<sup>1-11</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> 42<sup>16</sup> Gk., 170 years; in all 240 years. This suggests that in the original story Job, like the antediluvians, was represented as living far back near the beginning of human history.

<sup>g</sup> 42<sup>17</sup> Lit., *satisfied with days*. It is a phrase used elsewhere in the O.T. by the priestly writers; cf. Gen. 25<sup>8</sup>, 35<sup>28</sup>.

Vindication of Job and condemnation of his friends

Reward of his steadfastness and piety

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